

JEWISH YOUTH COMES HOME

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The Story of the Youth Aliyah, 1933-1943

by

NORMAN BENTWICH

LONDON

VICTOR GOLLANCZ LTD

1944

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TO THE MEMORY OF
WILFRID ISRAEL
LOVER OF PEACE:
WHO WORKED AND DIED FOR YOUTH ALIYAH

*Printed in Great Britain by The Camelot Press Limited
London and Southampton*

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GLOSSARY

Aguda—Literally “band”: the name of the religiously orthodox section of Jewry.

Bachad—A religious Socialist party. Their name is derived from the initial Hebrew letters of three words meaning “League of Religious Pioneers.”

Emek—Valley: the Vale of Esdraclon or Jezreel.

Hakhshara—Preparation for life in Palestine.

Haluz (plural, *Haluzim*)—Pioneer.

Haver (plural, *Haverim*)—Comrade.

Kevutza—Collective labour group settled on the land.

Kibbutz—A bigger group of the kind.

Meshek (plural, *Meshakim*)—Farm or settlement.

Mizrachi—Religious party of Zionists. Their name is derived from Hebrew words meaning “The Spiritual Centre.”

Sihot—Debates.

Tiyul—Excursion through Palestine.

Vaad—Committee or council.

Yishuv—The Jewish population of Palestine.

PREFACE

THIS BOOK DESCRIBES an original and a joint aspect of two romances of our day: the rescue of the young Jewish generation from destruction by Hitler, and their part in building the Jewish National Home. It is the story of the march during the last ten years, in war and in peace, of ten thousand boys and girls from the lands of Nazi oppression to Palestine, the land of promise, to be apprenticed there for agricultural and industrial life in collective and co-operative villages, and then themselves to form fresh collective and co-operative groups, planting the soil. The hybrid name "Youth Aliyah," by which the Movement is called in English-speaking countries, has a certain fitness. For the source and material of it are European, the goal and the spirit of it are Hebraic. The story is equally remarkable as a record of rural settlement, an account of adventure, a novel development of education and an example of humanity.

Material for the book was to hand in a Hebrew volume, *The Book of the Youth*, which was prepared in 1940 as a tribute of the Youth Aliyah to its "mother" and director, Henrietta Szold, on her eightieth birthday. The volume includes first-hand accounts, by a hundred hands, by the youth themselves and the teachers, of the development of the Aliyah from an effort at self-help of a group of German-Jewish boys, to a world-wide movement recognised by the Jewish community and the British Government as the principal means of saving the remnant of the Jewish youth in Europe. It includes also analysis of the educational and social problem which has presented itself, by the teachers and the directors of the groups. My debt to the collection is obvious, and parts of the book are translations from it. It was best to let the members of the "Aliyah" speak for themselves, and to give their pictures of the transformation. The writing of the book, begun in London, was finished in Jerusalem. And I have had the opportunity of verifying the pictures, visiting and seeing with my own eyes the villages, the collective settlements and the schools; those who are in training and those who have been trained; the new arrivals and those planted on the land who are now preparing others.

At the end of the last war I was the Chairman of the Palestine Orphan Committee which initiated two children's villages, with the purpose of fitting a fraction of the orphaned children of the

country for productive life. The contrast is marked between those hesitant beginnings and the achievement to-day of an educational plan for thousands of children who have been brought to Palestine for a fresh start in life.

For the chapter on the life of Henrietta Szold I am under obligation to Marvin Lowenthal's *Life and Letters*, which appeared also in connection with her eightieth birthday. The directors of the Aliyah in London and in Palestine have given me unstinted help. It is part of the impersonal outlook of those who direct the enterprise that they deprecate individual mention. But I cannot refrain from thanking Mrs. Michaelis-Stern and Mrs. Gustav Warburg of the London Office, and Miss Szold herself and her adjutant, Hans Beyth, who have allowed me to read to them in Jerusalem part of the manuscript. I am grateful also to Recha Freier, who had the first vision of the Youth Aliyah, for letting me read an unpublished account of the beginnings of the Movement.

One word about terminology. I have used without distinction "youth" and "children" for the members of the Aliyah. The original emigrants were boys and girls of fifteen to seventeen years, who may be more exactly described as adolescents. But that is an awkward word, and "children" has been used for a similar movement in England to aid refugees, which covers all young persons from infancy to eighteen years. I have used, too a few Hebrew terms which have become part of the vocabulary of the Movement and cannot be readily translated. Their meaning is explained in a glossary.

The book has been written in the tenth year of the work of Youth Aliyah. The record of what it has done in a period of destruction is an earnest of what it aspires to do in the period of reconstruction which is beginning.

PRELUDE

THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE is one of the pathetic romances of the Middle Ages. After the failure of the fourth Crusade which, instead of fighting the Saracens and redeeming Jerusalem, turned to the easier conquest of Constantinople, the Christian Byzantine capital, and the looting of that fabulously rich city, Pope Innocent III sought to rouse in Europe a fresh ardour of the Cross. The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem was tottering to its fall. His call to rescue the Holy Land was preached in every church of Western Christendom. Women, children, the old, the blind and the lame were enrolled in the sacred militia. The failure of the former expeditions was attributed to the impurity of the lives, the dissolute manners and the fratricidal strife of the knights. The faith and prayers of the pure-minded would do what the armies of the knights had failed to do. A frenzy of devotion ran through the youth. A young shepherd of France, Stephen, led thousands of boys and girls to follow his guidance, and rode on a wagon at the head of his infant army to Marseilles, promising that he would lead his followers dry-shod through the seas to the Holy Land. About the same time a German youth, Nicholas, gathered thousands of young Germans, and led them to Genoa. Stephen's host was decoyed and kidnapped by Christian dealers in slaves at Marseilles; and such part of it as survived the perils of the sea was sold into slavery to the Moors in Egypt. The army of Nicholas, which made for Genoa, never crossed the sea. Nothing was left of it, so it is said, but the legend of the Pied Piper of Hamelin. Yet Pope Innocent, undaunted by the collapse of the Children's Crusade, used it as a fresh call to arms. "The very children put us to shame. While we sleep, they go forth gladly to conquer the Holy Land." The Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, (which put upon the Jews—the eternal scapegoat—the indignity of the yellow badge), adopted a decision to raise a fresh army of knights. A Truce of God was proclaimed in Europe for four years; a great host set out to Egypt, captured Damietta, then was ignominiously defeated and returned.

Seven hundred years later, another body of the youth of Europe set out to the Holy Land, to redeem it. This time some thousands of boys and girls gathered in Germany, in Poland and in other European lands, sailed from Marseilles, Genoa and Trieste, and reached their bourne. They were Jews and Jewesses between the

ages of thirteen and eighteen, who, menaced by physical and mental persecution in their native country, were filled with the faith that they would vivify the land, not by arms, but by the work of their hands. They were to prepare themselves for the redemption in the Land itself, learning to work its soil, and learning to speak the language of the Bible, so that they might have their part in the building of the National Home. They were not a crusade, but an Aliyah—that is, a going-up or an immigration; not an army, but a continuous trickle of small bands. The Hebrew Aliyah means both physical ascent and spiritual ascent. They were moved by idealism and ardent, passionate hope, but they were none the less a planned and ordered body.

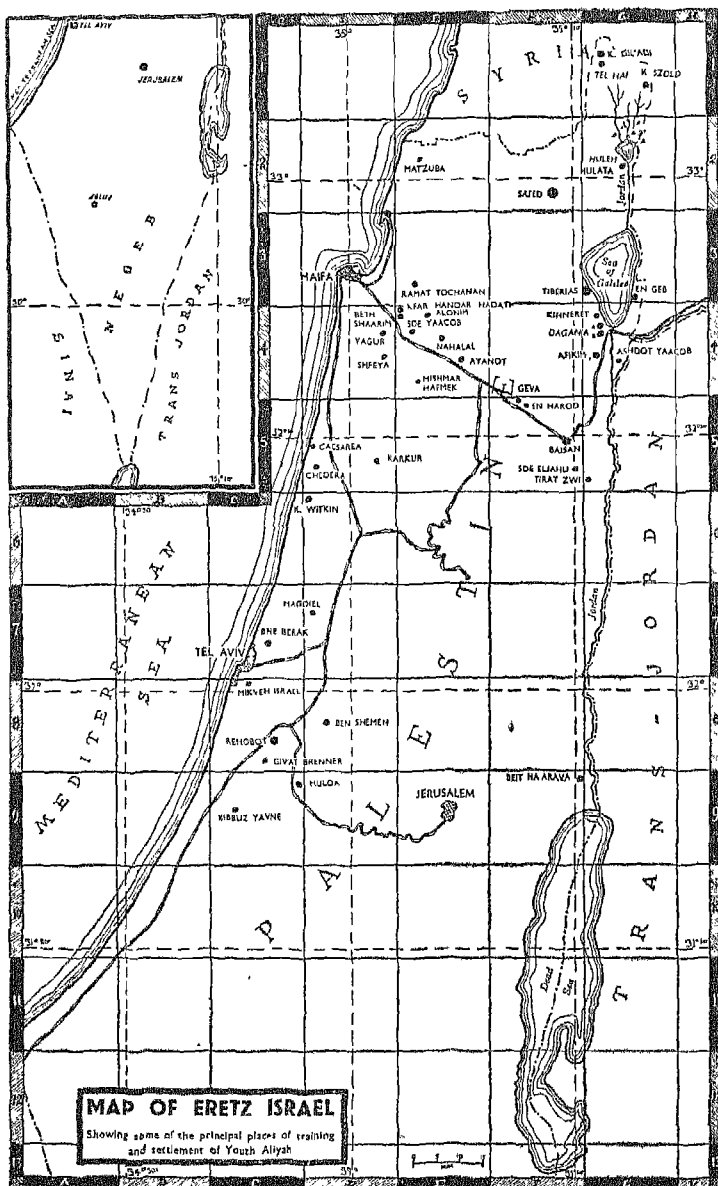
Some of them had to brave perils and hardships on the way as terrible as those which had destroyed the children's hosts in the Middle Ages. Bands set out from Poland in the autumn of 1939, when the Nazi hordes were overrunning the country. They were a phantom host in the van of the armies, chased by bombs and machine-guns. But sheltering by day in the woods, they made their way by night, carrying the weaker and the young children in wagons. The elder boys helped the horses by pushing the wagons, and sang in Hebrew as they pushed, "We go to our Land."

A party of older Jewish fugitives from Warsaw, writers of a newspaper, fell in with them on the road, and have given us a vivid picture. That adult party had marched on foot for days, some two hundred kilometres from Warsaw. They had seen towns go up in flames. Their food had come to an end, and they were spent. Death would come, if not to-day, on the morrow. Suddenly they heard Hebrew speech. Was it a dream? Here was a band of boys and girls, pushing wagons with children and singing a Hebrew song. It was a group of a hundred, some older boys, some children, of the Youth Aliyah, which had set forth from an agricultural training centre outside Warsaw to cross the borders of Poland to a neutral land. When one of the elders asked: "Where do we go from here?" the leader of the boys said: "To the Land of Israel." From the mouth of the children came hope and life.

The party arrived at Kovel, the border town of Lithuania, with the Red Army which had entered from the East. There they found a Jewish collective group, a Kibbutz, who welcomed them. Messengers were sent out to Vilna, and the party moved on. There another Kibbutz received them and looked after them, till arrangements could be made for their journey through Latvia, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Belgium and France. They were

taken in batches by aeroplane from Kovno to Riga, and from Riga to Stockholm. From Stockholm they went by air again to Amsterdam, and thence by train to Marseilles, and from Marseilles to Haifa by boat; for the Mediterranean was not yet closed. And so they reached their goal—the Holy Land. At each stopping place they found a warm welcome and practical help. The brotherhood of Israel was well-knit, and every member of the group arrived in Palestine.

It is the story of the march of Jewish youth, ten thousand of them, to the Holy Land in our day which is told in these pages.



I. THE GROUND

CHAPTER I

GERMAN JEWRY BEFORE HITLER

THE JEWS, IT HAS BEEN said, represent the intensive mood of the people of the country where they live. Germany is the country of Kant, Fichte, Hegel, and a host of metaphysical and national philosophers. So the Jews of Germany in the nineteenth century, since emancipation gave them the opportunity of taking part in civil, political and intellectual life, were distinguished by their intellectual and philosophical interests. The German genius for theorising and the German method and order were assimilated by their leaders. While in England and America the man of affairs was the accepted head of the community, in Germany it was the enlightened rabbi, the academic teacher and the religious philosopher. The mass of the community recognised the importance of being earnest, and have through the generations taken both Judasim and German culture seriously. Yet in no country of Western Europe was it so hard for the Jews to secure, and then to maintain, their civil and political rights and their social position. Each wave of liberalism was met by a wave of violent reaction, by a deliberate return to the primitive racial narrowness. So after the Jew Moses Mendelssohn, the Gentile Gottfried Lessing, and the revolutionary liberator Napoleon Bonaparte had brought about the abolition of the ghetto in Prussia and the other German states at the beginning of the nineteenth century, a fresh movement of oppression started. It was justified by the national philosophers. Fichte, who wrote the bible of German patriotism, declared that "to protect ourselves against the Jews, I see no other means but to conquer the Promised Land and pack them off to it."

A half-romantic, half-savage reversion to tribal ideas has been a constant factor in German thought. Christian Teutomania swept the country after the Vienna Congress in 1815, and a new "hep-hep," recalling the fury of the Crusades against the helpless Jews, was proclaimed. When the revolution of 1848 again asserted the principles of humanity, and Jewish champions like Riesser and Borne regained for their brethren the rights of men and of citizens, the community enjoyed equal opportunity for

thirty years. Once more, however, the racial and tribal fury was stirred, and during the latter decades of the nineteenth century attacks upon Jews based upon race became the slogan of political parties and the doctrine of academic circles. Anti-Semitism, however, was checked for a time by the Liberal, the Democratic and the Socialist parties, so that it did not become a popular movement. And the Jewish community made a concentrated and continuous effort to defend their civil rights.

The German Jews, imitating the German love of theory, constantly examined the basis of their Judaism and the relation to their fellow citizens. In the first generation of the emancipation a group of scholars, headed by Heine's friend, Leopold Zunz, established what they called "The Science of Judaism" (*Wissenschaft des Judentums*). They aimed at interpreting to the Jews themselves their cultural heritage from the past, so that they might have respect for it when they imbibed modern thought, and winning for Jewish culture the respect of the Gentiles. It was in Germany that the synagogue ritual was first modified; and what is known as Reform or Liberal Judaism had its origin. The broad aim was to adjust religion and life to German and Christian standards. But while German Jews were eminent in assimilating the thought and manners of their environment, and a part, deliberately shedding the national elements of Judaism, regarded themselves as German citizens of the Jewish faith, the bulk of the community was closely knit. Judaism meant something more to them than religious worship. It was a social as well as a cultural bond. Every Jew was a member of the community unless he declared himself to be without religion (*konfessionslos*). He was born in it, and did not have to join it. The rabbi, too, of the community was recognised by the government and public bodies as the leader; and was regularly a man of culture and learning, in the small congregations as well as in the big towns.

From the first generation, however, of the emancipation, the baptism of children by their parents, in order to give them a better chance in life, led away the young. Marriages of Jew and Gentile, too, became more and more frequent, and finally accounted for nearly half the unions of German Jewry, till Hitler's legislation put an end to them. The class which later was known as "non-Aryan Christians" was multiplied. They were often uprooted, uneasy in the Gentile society, and alien in the Jewish society, like the Marranos, the secret Jews of Spain and Portugal in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, who professed Christianity to avoid death or expulsion. Professor Einstein remarked that the great enemies of Jewish dignity were fatty

degeneration, that is, loss of moral fibre from wealth, and a kind of spiritual dependence on the non-Jewish world.

For those who remained members of the synagogue social life was passed in great measure within a Jewish circle. That was due partly to a patent and latent anti-Semitism of the Gentiles, partly to a strong consciousness of the community. The youth, too, reproducing the "Buende" and the "Vereine" and the clubs of their environment, were organised in Jewish bodies, and pursued seriously and methodically the political and the religious ideologies of the time. Ideology was as essential an element of the German Jew and Gentile as body and soul. Till the end of the world war German Jews were in practice excluded from the higher careers in the Army and the Civil Service. But the foundation of the Weimar Republic in 1918 produced a greater change in Jewish life than in any part of the German folk. Jews were prominent in the Social-Democratic Party. One of the principal authors of the Weimar Constitution was born a Jew; another was Socialist President of Bavaria; a Jew was Premier of Prussia; another was Prussian Minister of Justice; and another, Walter Rathenau, became Foreign Minister of the Reich. All the barriers, except in the Regular Army, were thrown down. With an elation comparable to that of the generation which emerged from the ghetto in the early part of the nineteenth century, the Jews seized opportunity, and made a signal contribution to every part of German life. At the same time the community experienced a revival of its Jewish thought. A fresh interest was spread in Jewish learning. Spiritual leaders like Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber and the philosopher Hermann Cohen exercised a big influence on the youth. Judaism was to be something positive. The "red assimilation" of the Marxists, whose doctrines were based on the revolutionary thinking of a Jew by race, was countered by a stronger assertion of Jewish consciousness. An Academy of the "Science of Judaism" was revived in Berlin.

The equality of the Weimar Republic, however, was short-lived—fatally short-lived. It provoked a reaction more violent and more brutal than any previous assertion of Teuton tribalism. For the Jews it was a misfortune that their equality and their opportunity to take a leading part in the political and intellectual life of the country followed the military, and coincided with the economic, collapse and the feeling of national humiliation. The Jewish middle class, which was the bulk of the community, suffered with the rest of the middle class when the financial system crashed. They suffered, indeed, more in proportion,

because so large a part was in the middle or lower bourgeoisie, engaged in every branch of commerce and the liberal professions, and most of all in clerical employments. But it was easy for frenzied and unscrupulous leaders of the reaction to point to Jews who prospered, held high position in Government service, were eminent in law or medicine or art, or masters of industry; and rouse against them the fury of millions of the unemployed and frustrated "little men." So National Socialism was pivoted on anti-Semitism, which a Socialist leader truly described as "the Socialism of the stupid." And what had been a reactionary doctrine of the academics and a motive of scribblers became the most infectious political passion and an incentive to murderous violence. It was symbolic that Walter Rathenau was murdered within a few days of his return from the meeting of the Assembly of the League of Nations, where as Foreign Minister he had pleaded Germany's cause. Nazi gangs had for weeks incited his murder in rude verse.

In the second decade after the war the Jewish position in Germany was undermined with terrifying speed and thoroughness. Political catastrophe was associated with economic catastrophe. Still nominally enjoying equal citizenship, the Jew was marked out everywhere as the butt of national and class hatred. He embodied for the growing party of Nazis three diverse, conflicting, but equal evils: democracy, plutocracy and Marxism. At the same time a large part of the young Jewish generation found itself deprived of the opportunity of useful work. If a few Jews prospered spectacularly, thousands fell by the way, miserably and unnoticed. Partly because of the boycott of Jewish business, partly because State socialism restricted the opportunity of individual enterprise, and Jews were more and more debarred from State service, and partly because the system of Liberal capitalism, with which the Jews had been closely associated, collapsed in Germany more thoroughly than elsewhere, the economic foundations were cut away. A study of the economic depression of German Jewry, prepared a few months before Hitler came to power, contained informing and alarming statistics. The visits of the unemployed to the Jewish Labour Exchange numbered in 1928, 39,000, in 1930, 62,000, and in 1932, 83,000. The feeling of impending tragedy was everywhere. The impoverishment of the middle class was aggravated by the psychical depression of all German Jewry. Jews, as an intellectual urban population, were more susceptible to the new unstabilising movements than the rest of the population. The occupational structure was ill-balanced. Despite many warnings, the trend

had continued to the professional and commercial callings. Of a total population of 560,000 in 1932, with 270,000 earners, 100,000 were engaged directly in commerce and trade, another 100,000 were clerical employees, 25,000 in the liberal professions, and only 40,000 were manual workers.

It was estimated that 7,500 left school, usually a secondary school, each year, and these boys and girls had to find their place. An institution for vocational guidance had been started during the previous decade, and its returns showed a steady but very gradual movement towards manual industry. Only small groups turned to agricultural training. But training workshops of the community had been established; and what previously had been an enterprise directed entirely for the resident immigrant from Eastern Europe (the half-despised Ostjuden), was becoming an integral activity of the whole community. The youth, more alert than their elders to the signs of impending doom, were beginning to explore fresh paths.

Nevertheless, the Jews of Germany as a whole, though greatly perturbed and ill at ease, lacked solidarity. The different sections maintained their conflicting ideologies. The 'German citizens of the Jewish faith' still believed that anti-Semitism was a passing phase, and could be met by reason and argument. A small party of Jewish National Germans adopted the nationalist ideas of the Nazis, with the exception of their anti-Semitism. On the other side, the Zionists and their associated groups of youth were rapidly gaining followers. The religiously orthodox Jews were perhaps the least affected. For them the inner life, conducted in accordance with the Torah, was always more important than secular activity. Politically the fragmentation of German Jewry was intensified, while economically the stress was constantly aggravated. In the social life the gulf between the old and young, parents and children, was widened. The hearts of the youth were turned from the parents. The parents ate sour grapes: the children wished to plant fresh vineyards.

It was in this shadow of collapse of the liberal society that the young generation had to face the challenge of the Hitler régime.

CHAPTER 2

JEWISH YOUTH MOVEMENTS IN GERMANY

THE JEWISH, LIKE THE GENTILE, youth of Germany in the Weimar Republic was organised to take part in civic life. It was accepted that the boy and girl leaving school would enrol

in one of the *Jugend* bodies distinguished by their religious, their social or their political ideas, or a combination of these. A part of the Jewish boys and girls were gathered in Jewish bodies. But before 1933, a part were accepted also into the political "Buende" of the Socialists and the Democrats. Naturally, the religious and nationalist sections adhered to Jewish societies: while the assimilating sections were happy in the general leagues. Jews shared with their fellows the romantic ardour which was a permanent feature of the German mind, and was strengthened by the events and outcome of the First World War. While the older people experienced after 1918 a sense of disaster and defeat, many of the younger cherished the dreams of a brave new order, and would play their part in founding it.

One constant aspect of the romance was the return to the simple life: getting back to Nature. A more serious development, in the German way, of the English Boy Scout idea was the Wandervogel movement, which for the mass meant excursions to the country and simple clothes, but for a few meant something more fundamental and adventurous. In its Jewish reflection, it fostered the growth of several groups which were associated with the Zionist ideal of life in productive work in Palestine. Some were concerned primarily with the development of athletics and physical fitness; and were later gathered into the Maccabee organisation. Others—a much smaller band—were concerned with the spiritual significance of Zion, and came particularly under the influence of the ethical philosopher, Martin Buber. They took the name of "*Werkleute*" (Builders) because, although they were immediately wrestling with ideas, they intended to pass to action. Others pursued a more definite purpose of settlement in the Land of Israel. The Jewish youth bodies, it has been said, were fighting on two fronts. They combined the general revolt of youth against the school and the home with the breaking away from the half-hearted Jewish atmosphere of their elders.

An essential characteristic of the youth movement on the Continent, and particularly in Germany, was the effort of the young to strike out a path for themselves. They were not directed by their elders as, for example, is the Boy Scout or Girl Guides movement in Britain. The English school system tends to make boys and girls carry on the tradition, rather than to break away from it. The school and family discipline in Germany tended, on the other hand, to make the adolescent break away for freedom; and that tendency was strengthened by the half-realised revolutionary movement after the First World War. Young Jews, in particular, experienced a stirring of the spirit. Zionist enthusiasm

was growing, if at first slowly. The reports that came from Palestine of the building of the National Home and of the manifold productive activity, the sports gatherings of the Maccabee bands from all parts of the world who held a Maccabean in Tel Aviv, and, above all, the visits of young workers from Palestine to the youth groups nourished it. The revolt against the narrow, ill-balanced occupational structure of German Jewry was strengthened as well by Palestine Jewry's external example as by internal pressure. Till the World War the enthusiasm of the youth for Palestine was rather intellectual than practical. One organisation, however, known as the Blau-Weiss (because it adopted the Zionist blue-white colours), founded before 1914, had as its goal to train young men for the land.

But it was during the war that the German Jewish youth first came into close touch with the Jews of Eastern Europe, and through them conceived a living relation to the Jewish workers in Palestine. Many young German Jews were fighting on the Russian front; and a few in 1915 issued a manifesto to Zionist students: "After the end of the war we must not go back to our earlier way of life. We must become land-workers and set forth to Palestine." Two years later some of the youth groups discussed the formation of a Pioneer movement in Germany. They were looking for means of realising the Zionist idea in immediate positive action, taking an active part in the building of Palestine and, lastly, of realising in their own societies the social ideals that were spreading through Europe. The Balfour Declaration gave a fresh and rousing hope of action. In October, 1918, the Jewish youth of Germany held a "*Tag*". Front-line soldiers met the young generation of the Blau-Weiss. While they were debating, came the news that Germany was seeking peace. They decided straightway to form a German branch of the Halutz movement. The programme was Hebrew speech, land-work, association with the workers in Palestine, and realisation of a new society by communal and collective settlement.

After the armistice they took the first steps to establish in Germany training centres for Palestine. Besides the Blau-Weiss, another group adopted the practical aim of turning young Jews into workers for Palestine, and combining the Zionist with the wandering motive. It was known as the Young Jewish Wanderers, and most of its members had come from Eastern Europe. Even before the Balfour Declaration was issued by the British Government in 1917, in favour of the Jewish National Home, both the cultural and the practical activities of German Zionists took on fresh life. That was helped by the mingling of German Jews

with the Polish Jews who were brought into the country for the war effort, and by the presence of leaders of the workers' party from Palestine. The forcible teaching of the war, moreover, stirred the Jewish national consciousness. The idea of self-determination of nationalities was not exclusively Anglo-American.

Nevertheless, Zionism at the end of the world war was still the faith of only a small minority of the younger and the older generation. The majority were divided between the more assimilating "Liberal" congregations and the congregations steadfastly adhering to the religious tradition; but were united in the belief that Judaism was essentially a religious and not a national bond, and that Jews should be integrated in German national life and thought. The rival bodies stated their faith in an abundant literature. Some words of Milton in his *Areopagus*, the appeal for free speech, are appropriate to the earnest debate of German Jewry on its purposes: "Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions."

Yet the ideal of a Socialist community of workers in Palestine began to spread. The early Zionists had been drawn largely from the middle class. They were professional men, merchants, intellectuals: and those who migrated to Palestine and settled on the soil employed largely Arab Fellah labourers. But first in Russia (which then included Poland and Lithuania, with their Jewish proletariat), and next in Western Europe, the conviction gained ground that Jews must do the hardest and simplest productive work, if they were to redeem themselves and redeem the Holy Land. With that conviction, they combined the will to establish a Socialist order. Many in Russia were influenced by the teaching of Tolstoy and Dostoievsky about regeneration by manual labour. Among these disciples, David Aaron Gordon migrated to Palestine in the early years of this century, and was one of the founders of the first Jewish collective community that was planted by the Lake of Galilee in 1905, and became the Meshek of Daganian (the Place of Corn). Gordon's doctrine was: "We want to stand up to our necks in the swamps, to feel the travail of creation. For us no labour is too hard. To create and replenish is our task. Without Jewish labour, there will be no Hebrew culture. We must seek to do all manner of work, from the hardest and roughest to the cleanest and most intelligent. The Jews returning to the soil must redeem it with the work of their hands, and not by the work of others."

Another Russian Jew of a different mould, Captain

Trumpeldor, who by his outstanding bravery in the Russo-Japanese War had won the rare distinction for a Jew of an officer's commission, during the World War inspired young refugees from Palestine in Egypt to form the Zion Mule Corps and to take their part in the Gallipoli campaign, and later inspired the formation of Jewish battalions in the British Army, brought into being a world-wide organisation of worker-pioneers. They were known by the Hebrew name Haluz, which means literally "girded up." They formed cells of preparation for "black" labour in Palestine. They were to fit themselves in hard conditions by hard work in camps in Europe, and then go forth to build roads, drain swamps and till the fields in the Land of Israel. No Haluz should be eligible for emigration till he had served his apprenticeship in agricultural or industrial groups in Europe. The way of life was laid down: and to fit the novice for the new environment he must be transformed physically, linguistically and spiritually. Besides manual work he should acquire Hebrew as a language, and a knowledge of Palestine and Jewish literature, and should live as a member of a close-knit community. Hebrew words were adopted for the principal activities; and the daily ritual included the singing of Hebrew folk-songs and the dancing of folk-dances, particularly the Horrah, in which old and young are clasped together in a pulsating circle. The ideal for which they were preparing was Working Hebrew Palestine.

The movement spread rapidly amongst young Jews of Russia, Poland and Eastern Europe during the years of revolution. The membership in Poland immediately after the war-years rose to tens of thousands. In Germany it rose much more slowly to a few hundreds. The training centres were multiplied. Those in Poland were rough and rude; but these conditions were a salutary introduction to the hardships which were faced by the early bands that got to the National Home in the 'twenties. In Germany the few centres were organised with more method. When immigration to Palestine was at last opened by the Civil Government of the Mandatory Power in 1920, bands of the Haluzim set out. They strengthened the ranks of the workers, mostly from Russia, who, in the decade before the war, had formed the Second Aliyah, as it was called, to distinguish it from the coming of the first farmers. To keep touch between those in the Land and those preparing for the Land, young emissaries were sped to the Jewish communities in Europe, and brought a touch of healthy reality to the theorising and discussions of the youth groups. All these influences together worked in the German community to transform the debating societies and the

cultural clubs into nurseries of workers. The progress was for a decade very gradual. Between 1920 and 1930 a baffling variety of groups shared a common ideal of preparation for Palestine, but were distinguished by an intense concentration on some particular theory of reaching their goal.

One determined expedition, however, put theory to the test of action. In 1921 the advance guard of the Blau-Weiss set forth to conquer the Land. In the following year several hundred went out. Some of them were planted in agricultural groups. But most formed workshops in the towns. Their romantic ardour was not fortified by any adequate equipment, either physical or spiritual. They were not prepared for the hardships of collective barrack life. They knew little or no Hebrew, were estranged from the manners and outlook of Eastern Jews, and were limited by the narrow loyalty to their own society. The experiment disappointed their hopes. Bit by bit the members fell away, and after a short period their settlement was dissolved. Most returned to the land which they believed, after all, to be their fatherland. The failure of this first organised German group discouraged for some time the youth movement to Palestine from Germany. But the group left in the land some resolute men who, when the call came, were to be leaders and directors of a larger enterprise.

The remnant of the Blau-Weiss was merged into a larger league, "Kadima" (meaning "forwards"), which concentrated on Jewish culture. The *Werkleute*, too, were absorbed in a larger organisation, which had its branches over Central Europe, and became more socialist and Marxist in outlook. The Young Jewish Wanderers, who previously had a vague aspiration of wandering, under the influence of the "Haluz" formed a league of "those going to the land" (Brit Haolim), which was attached to the European organisation of Habonim (the builders). The change of name of these societies reflects a change of spiritual direction. The German Jewry was linking itself with the East European, adopting its Hebrew titles, and strengthening the resolution to take a direct part in the building of a National Home. Henceforth the societies in Germany had their counterparts in Palestine, which became magnetic points for their members. Austrian and Czech Jews were also during this period linking themselves with the Jews of Eastern Europe. The Zionist enthusiasm welded together the diverse elements.

Circumstances were leading the generation from the contemplative to the practical, from the vague ideal to definite action. Cultural activity was not enough. And as the political crisis shattered many doctrinal illusions, the young people were

contriving to tear themselves free from the ideological brambles. Jewish history in Germany prevailed over German-Jewish philosophy.

From 1930 there was a German Aliyah on a small scale. While the young men of the middle-class Blau-Weiss had not been able to mingle easily with the proletarian workers of the socialist settlements, small parties of Haluzim who went out from Germany were more *steadfast*. The Haluz movement worked a striking change in the position of Jewish agricultural labour, as it was before the World War. As late as 1912, the teacher of spiritual Zionism, Ahad Ha'am, after a visit to Palestine, wrote of the enterprising Jewish farmers whom he had seen in the forty villages scattered about the Land. "What have they to do with the building of the National Home? The basis of country life is that mass population of poor labourers and peasants who barely make a living from the toil of the land, whether on their own land or on the land of others. This mass of peasants in Palestine is not Jewish; and it is difficult to picture how it will become so." The doubts were dispelled during the first two decades after the war.

The Nazi revolution gave an immediate impulse to practical Zionism in Germany. Between April, 1933, and September, 1934, the Haluz societies, which had hitherto numbered 500 members, leapt forward and enrolled 15,000. Over 2,000 comrades, who had acquired their preliminary training in Germany, set forth to the communal and co-operative settlements in Palestine. They were the largest group of the Haluz in that period of emigration. The little trickle, which had found its way since 1920, became a steady stream. Most of them were settled in two of the collective communities, Yagur, some ten miles from Haifa, under the Carmel ridge, and Givat Brenner, in Sharon. A branch of the German Haluzim, composed of those who were religious and observant of the traditional Law, had as their ideal to combine work on the land with the fulfilment of the religious life. At the same time they were devoted Socialists, and believed that Socialism was a fulfilment of the Mosaic Law. Their sign was "Tora Va'Avoda", i.e. Jewish tradition and manual work; and they were known as the Bachad, from the initials of the Hebrew words, Brit Haluzim Datiim, the League of Religious Pioneers. They were in close touch with a Christian Socialist community, the Bruderhof, who were pacifists and collectivists, and who, fleeing from the Nazi tyranny, later found refuge first in England and then in South America.

In the Social-Democrat Republic of the Reich the Socialist achievement of Jewish labour in Palestine naturally won growing

sympathy. While older Zionists were still engaged in controversy with the leaders of the assimilation, pamphleteering about Jewish nationalism, the students were concerned with the part which they might play in the creation of a Socialist, creative Israel. They were not only pathfinders for themselves; they were preparing stations to receive bands of youth who shared their Zionist, Socialist, or religious outlook, when the stress in Germany impelled a less voluntary exodus. The youth movements from 1933 were agencies that offered their members an opening in life; and they gathered adherents who were groping for a foothold. The Jewish flight from Germany was a symptom of the disease of Germany.

On the other hand, the repression from without tended to foster the solidarity of the Jewish youth leagues within Germany. Already in 1927, the conference of the youth body which was attached to the assimilating section of "German citizens of the Jewish Faith" declared that, while Jews had done their full duty in the war, they had lost their fatherland and must begin again the struggle for citizen rights. In 1924 the foundation had been laid of a central youth organisation to bring together all the bodies, Zionist and non-Zionist, orthodox and liberal; and to foster in all a Jewish consciousness. One of its early enterprises was to secure a hostel in the Harz Mountains, where the leaders of the societies gathered together for study of Judaism. It organised, too, an annual gathering for physical and cultural exercise. As the economic crisis was aggravated, it embarked on activities for rehabilitation of the youth. Its inspiring leader was Dr. Ludwig Tietz. Jews were more and more excluded from the non-Jewish youth movements, which, in turn, were more and more dominated by the Hitler National-Socialist Jugend. But Jewish bodies were still admitted to the general youth organisation of Germany. It was the aim of Ludwig Tietz to unify the Jewish youth organisation in its relations with the non-Jewish youth. That aim was secured in the grim months that followed the first ebullition of the Nazi tyranny; but he died on the very day that official recognition was received. When the central body was accepted as the representative of Jewish youth, ninety-seven separate organisations were registered with it.

The central body had another function: to guide the youth movements in regions and States of Germany which were consolidated by the Third Reich. The need of spiritual leadership, as of social direction, was manifest. Palestine, of which the vision had hitherto been cherished by a minority, became a dominant yearning, because it offered both a physical and spiritual home.

The Zionist youth groups soon numbered over 20,000 members, and their hostels became centres of adult education. The central body was concerned to deepen the understanding of Judaism; and organised in these hostels nurseries—to adapt the German term, *Seminar*—where men of spiritual leadership expounded the essence and ideals of Judaism. Martin Buber, who in himself embodied the union of East-European Jewish learning with German philosophy, was the seer. He and a few disciples visited the hostels, like travelling friars of the Middle Ages, and his readings of the Bible inspired the young people to a fresh Jewish faith. The leaders and teachers took the message back to the young groups, and so strengthened Jewish consciousness.

Larger gatherings of the youth were organised so long as Nazi tyranny allowed. In 1934 three thousand took part in a sports festival in the suburbs of Berlin. The report issued in 1936 recorded, however, that “for technical reasons” the sports day could not be held in 1935. By then the conditions were sterner, and the young Jews had no time for sport. They must find new homes, fresh woods and pastures. Physical and spiritual preparation (*Hachsharah*) passed to Pilgrims’ Progress (*Aliyah*).

CHAPTER 3

GERMAN JEWRY IN PALESTINE BEFORE 1933

THROUGH THE AGES, since the Roman destruction of the Judean state, the Jews scattered over the world have not ceased to regard Palestine as the Land of Israel. It was part of their religious faith that they would be restored to the land; and whenever it was possible, they maintained in it congregations and schools. The collection of Zion’s pence for the maintenance of the remnant was a cherished institution. Schemes for the settlement of Jews on the soil were multiplied in the nineteenth century. But it was not till the last two decades, when the persecution of the largest Jewish community, that of Tsarist Russia, was intensified, that an organised movement was inaugurated. Then small groups of young Jews from Russia and from Rumania set forth to reclaim the wasted and derelict land, and planted what were called “colonies.” The Lovers of Zion were at once farmers and men of piety and learning. Mostly they were innocent of the science of agriculture; and when they fell on hard times and were decimated by disease, they sought the assistance of the generous and big-hearted head of the French

house of Rothschild. And not in vain. With his help, village was added to village, till at the outbreak of the First World War they numbered forty, with some 15,000 inhabitants.

Yet, while the love of Zion moved to action chiefly the Jews of Eastern Europe, many of the original leaders of Zionism were from German Jewry. One of the prophetic heralds, who seemed in his day to be a voice crying in the wilderness, was a German-Jewish Socialist, comrade of Karl Marx and Lassalle. Moses Hess, in his *Rome and Jerusalem*, written in 1861 under the combined influence of the Italian Risorgimento and incipient anti-Semitism, made the first effort in modern times to state the Jewish problem of homelessness fairly and squarely, and to propound a radical solution, a national movement as against philanthropic colonisation.¹ Thirty years later his call was repeated by a Jew of German culture, who uttered a rousing message, and this time turned the sentimental longing of the mass of East European Jewry into the will of a nation. Theodor Herzl, whose home was Vienna, the hearth of political anti-Semitism, called to the people to unite, and fashioned an assembly and an executive on the lines of Western democracy. It was in Vienna, Cologne and Berlin that the Zionist offices were successively directed till the First World War, by Herzl himself, his successor, David Wolfsohn, and Professor Otto Warburg. When in the early years of the century after Herzl's death, the Zionist body started in Ottoman Palestine to develop colonisation and education on national lines, it chose for its director in the land a German Jew, Dr. Arthur Ruppin, who remained in that capacity for thirty-five years, and brought to his work German orderliness and thoroughness as well as original vision and constructive energy.

It was another German Jew, a Professor of Mathematics at Heidelberg University, who first conceived the practical instrument of national colonisation. Professor Schapira was the author of the plan for a Jewish National Fund which should acquire land in Palestine as the inalienable possession of the people, and make it available for agricultural and urban settlement and for the cultural institutions of the national life. Another German professor—the academic strain is notable—Franz Oppenheimer, initiated a significant change in the method of Jewish agricultural settlement during the preparation period before the First World War. In place of the village of individual farmers,

¹ It is a sign of the respect of East-European Jewry for German culture, that in 1881 the Russian Jew, Dr. Leo Pinsker, published in German his pamphlet on Auto-emancipation, which was another herald of the national movement.

employing Arab labour for the rough work, supported by philanthropic associations, and directed by a not always sympathetic bureaucracy, he persuaded the Zionist Organisation to try the experiment of a large co-operative farm. There the settlers should be their own masters, and should also be their own labourers. The first venture of the kind was established in the Vale of Esdraelon at Merhavia (meaning "enlargement") in 1910. A few years before that, another venture, a more thorough collective settlement on the Russian model, was tried in the Jordan Valley. It had the help of the Palestine office directed by Dr. Ruppin; and it thrived. It was not, indeed, the first of its kind; for, as noted above,¹ a handful of enthusiasts from Russia had already established themselves in the same region as a rural commune, eschewing private property and sharing all things.

Those early associations of Jews of Germany with the Zionist Palestine movement prepared the way for the growth of Zionism as a popular force in the period of repression and crisis. But it is worth recalling that Germany, Jewish and Christian, had a close association with the development of Palestine for nearly a century, and had exercised a more continuous influence on the material and cultural progress than any other European Power. The beginnings of scientific agriculture and of modern industrial enterprise and housing conditions were brought, however, not by German Jews, but by German Christians. In the 'sixties groups of Christian Socialists from Württemberg, who had formed a movement known as the "Temple," came out and planted suburban and agricultural villages in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa and Nazareth. The German "colonies" of the "Templars" preceded the Jewish agricultural colonies. They were oases of order and scientific and neat cultivation in the desert of neglect. The colonists flourished. They established the first clean and decent hotels, the first modern bakeries and dairies, the first smithies and chemist shops, the first carriage services. They were, in fact, the pioneers of Westernisation. But, as they flourished, they modified the principles which had inspired them to come to the Holy Land to live in the manner of the early Christian disciples, and became patriotic German colonists.

The political ambitions of the German Empire, which are described in the term, "Der Drang nach Osten," led to the resolute expansion of German influence in Palestine from the beginning of this century. Kaiser Wilhelm II made his Crusader visit to the Turkish Sultan in Stambul in 1898, and followed it by

¹ See Chapter 2, p. 22.

a spectacular progress through Palestine. Following his apparition, four bastions of German religious orders were erected round the Holy City: a cathedral and a hostel next to the Church of the Sepulchre, a towering fortress-like church on Mount Zion, a vast hospice outside the Damascus Gate, and lastly, a hospice in the form of a German baronial castle, and bearing the name of the Empress, which dominates the city from the Mount of Olives. (The two hospices provided the seats of government of the British Administration in the decade after the Occupation in 1918.) Before the outbreak of the World War, Germany was steadily advancing her claim to be the first European Power in the Holy Land. Her buildings were designed to overshadow those of the Russians, the French and the Italians—Great Britain did not enter into the competition—her four thousand “Templar” settlers were encouraged to extend their enterprise; her monastic and philanthropic orders multiplied their schools and institutions.

As part of the German expansion the German-Jewish body which was concerned with the interests of Jews abroad, the “Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden,” was led to extend its activities in Palestine. It had entered the field of modern education for Oriental Jews after the French and British Jewries. Now, following the example of the German Christian bodies, it was to emulate, and if possible to overshadow, their activities. Its principal enterprise was the building at Haifa of the “Herzlia” polytechnic college, which was to be a Jewish counterpart of the Charlottenburg Technicum. The original endowment of the institute came, indeed, from a Russian Jew who, observing that German power was in the ascendant, entrusted the administration to the Hilfsverein. The governing body included representatives of Russian and American as well as of German Jewry. Before the college was opened in 1913, a serious issue arose about the language of teaching. The German governors pressed for German: the Russians, supporting the demand of Palestine Jewry, claimed that Hebrew should be the language of instruction for technical as well as general subjects. The Americans were for a middle course. The establishment of Hebrew as the living language of the people returning to the Land of Israel from all parts of the world was one of the Zionist aims. Its achievement within one generation has been a miracle of our time. And the German policy was an affront to popular feeling.

A novel “Kulturkampf” was waged in Palestine. It affected the existing elementary and secondary schools of the Hilfsverein besides the unopened technical institute. The German directors

endeavoured to make German the primary language: and most of the staff and pupils broke away and formed new Hebrew schools. The opening of the Technicum had to be postponed, and had not been carried out before the outbreak of war. But a secondary school which was attached to the institute, under a German-Jewish educationist of repute, was initiated, and adopted Hebrew. That school, and its director, Dr. Biram, have played a part for thirty years in the educational life of Palestine Jewry; and served to attract a stream of pupils from Germany, because the school had a standard in no way inferior to that of a German "Gymnasium."

After the World War German dominance in Palestine suffered a setback; the lead amongst the Jews had passed to the English and Americans. And the main stream of immigration came from Poland and Eastern Europe. Until 1933, the total German-Jewish contribution to the National Home amounted to not more than 3,500 souls out of 200,000. Nevertheless, German Jewry continued to supply Zionist leaders in the National Home for practical and intellectual work. And while the schools of the Hilfsverein were taken over by the Jewish National Council as part of the public Hebrew system, a fresh German-Jewish enterprise was founded which was to have a great influence on the Children's Movement. In 1924, Dr. Lehmann, who had moved the Hilfsverein to establish a children's institute in the Lithuanian city of Kovno (Kaunas), had the idea of transforming the Institute into a Palestinian school for life on the soil. He was convinced that the regeneration of the Jewish people called for a return of the young Jew and Jewess to the village, to production in its simplest and healthiest forms. He won for his enterprise leading Jews of Germany, who, without being Zionists, were attracted by the ideal of creative Jewish youth in the Holy Land. In 1925 he came to Palestine with fifty orphans, and received a small building and an area of land, partly forest and partly tilth, in the Judean foothills. The area, which was close to the native home of the Maccabees and full of Maccabean associations, had been acquired by the Jewish National Fund before the war for the planting of a forest of olive trees to commemorate Herzl; and a forest home had been built. So the scene was dedicated to the heroic memories of the present day as well as the heroic Jewish memories of the past. This was the origin of the children's village of Ben Shemen (literally, "the child of olive oil"), which to-day has become a children's republic of seven hundred boys and girls. Its motto is "To the Village," and its emblem an olive branch and a sheaf of corn. Besides a general education, which is

given, of course, in Hebrew, the pupils receive training in agriculture and home-crafts; and the governing aim is to create a model Palestine village. Dr. Lehmann's personality attracted to his village children of many Palestine families, and also a few children of Jewish families in Europe who, predicting the storm, sent them to prepare for life in the Home. It was in Ben Shemen that the first seedlings of the Youth Aliyah were planted.

To complete the background of the picture of the Youth Aliyah, a word should be said of earlier movements for planting European children in Palestine to prepare there for redemption of the land. As with the agricultural colonies, European Christian effort preceded the effort of European Jewry. During the nineteenth century, Palestine was the classical land, so to say, of Christian orphanages. The rivalry between the Churches, the Greek Orthodox, the Roman Catholic, and the Protestant, took the form partly of emulation in institutes for children. Hence the religious buildings of Jerusalem include a chain of Russian (Orthodox) homes, a vast pile of the French orphanage of St. Vincent de Paul, which provides for some hundreds of boys and girls, another vast pile, built in the style of the Bargello of Florence by an Italian Order, which provides for some hundreds brought up as Italian Catholics, and a third, less monumental, with the Aramaic name, Talitha Kumi, which provides a German and Protestant education. A rural enterprise, which has played an important part in training both Arabs and Europeans for agricultural work, is the college of the Salesian Brotherhood at Kfar Gamala, in the Judean hills between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. That Institute, built around the ruins of a village or township of the first century, and the Jewish Mikveh Israel agricultural school near Jaffa (founded in 1876) were the principal nurseries of modern European cultivation till the First World War.

The Jewish communities also regarded Palestine as the favoured country for orphans. Indeed, in the early years of this century, before the National Home had become a living and inspiring centre for all Jewry, two of the principal classes of immigrants were old people who came to Palestine to die and be buried in the holy soil, and orphan children who were maintained and educated in Jewish lore at Orthodox institutions in the Holy Cities. But already before the World War, a more constructive effort to prepare young orphans for work in the Land and on the land had been initiated. One of the pioneers among the Russian Lovers of Zion, Israel Belkind, moved the Zionist Congress to adopt a scheme for taking to Palestine

children who had been made orphans in the Russian pogroms. After the massacres at Kishineff in 1903, he brought to the country a band of thirty-seven boys and fourteen girls. But he had not prepared ahead any place for their reception. As the early settlers on the land from Russia were saved from disaster by the far-seeing generosity of Baron Edmond de Rothschild, so these young orphans were enabled to find a home and prepare for the work on the land in one of the Baron's foundations in the hills of Samaria. Near the Jewish village of Zikhron Jacob, in the off-shoot of Shefeya, a convalescent home had been built; and that home, with an ample area of land for cultivation, was made over to the children's group. The enterprise lacked skilful professional direction; and the aspirations of its founder were not altogether fulfilled. But the example had been given of training children from Europe to be productive land-workers, and it could be applied to those who were not orphans.

When, at the end of the World War, another movement was initiated for bringing to Palestine a few out of the thousands of orphan children who were destitute in the Ukraine, the village of Shefeya was again available for a children's agricultural centre. This time the direction was undertaken by a body with greater responsibility and more orderly tradition. The Palestine Orphan Committee, sponsored by the American Jewish women's organisation, Hadassah, took charge of the home in Shefeya, and of another similar centre, known as the "Hill of the Archer," in the newly-founded Balfouria in the Plain of Esdraelon. These two children's villages were the first achievements in the training of immigrant children to be agricultural pioneers. And besides the orphans brought from Europe, Palestine had a war legacy of thousands of Jewish orphaned children who fell to the care of the community.

That absorption of 4,000 boys and girls in the economic life was a prelude to the achievement of the Aliyah; and some of the German teachers, who were active in this early essay, were to give a lead in the later and larger experiment. So when the crisis came in 1933, German-Jewish youth itself could find in the national home kindred points and an outlet for its baffled idealism. Jews of the world, and among them pioneers from Germany, were establishing a commonwealth, not in the sense of a political State, but a better order of society in which wealth was won and used for the common good. The individual in that society, whatever his work, was conscious of being a member of a close-knit community which was engaged in a creative and constructive enterprise, reclaiming the Land to its old fertility, restoring the national life, language and culture of the Jewish

people, and seeking to make its contribution to the larger world. It was another principle of that society that women should have equal opportunity and engage in every function. Co-education was established firmly in the schools; and the same freedom of development and expression was given to the two sexes. Palestine was, then, not a country of escape and refuge like any other, but a land which beckoned with the promise of a noble adventure. It was sown with Messianic hopes, it was in the forefront of progressive social and economic and cultural movement, and it was pregnant with future. What country could so surely command the loyalty of the youth to their people, their yearning for a home of their own, their ardour for service, their devotion to a cause of humanity?

II. SOWING

CHAPTER 4

BEGINNINGS OF YOUTH ALIYAH

THE PROSPECTS OF GERMAN-JEWISH youth grew steadily more hopeless as the Nazi menace became insistent and the moral collapse of Germany more crushing. After the first decisive electoral advance of the Nazis in 1930, physical attacks on Jews were multiplied, and discrimination against Jews in large parts of the public and economic life was aggravated. When six million of the German manhood, one-tenth of the population, were unemployed, a greater proportion of the half million Jews suffered from unemployment. Worse than the economic frustration was the moral and psychological set-back. Idealist youth could see little hope of setting things right in their own country: they must fight, not only for the larger causes of humanity, but for their own elementary human rights.

It was in a state of despondency that a group of a dozen boys came in the early months of 1932 to visit Recha Freier, the wife of a rabbi in Berlin who had lived formerly in Bulgaria. She had prophetic vision and a fiery temperament. She was known as an enthusiastic worker for Palestine, a friend of the young, and an invincible fighter for any cause which she espoused. The little band came to her for help in finding a livelihood. They had been thrown out of their employment in Berlin because they were Jews. They sought guidance, not, indeed, to get to Palestine, although they were Zionists, but to find work in any town of Western Germany where they might engage in some productive task. She saw that, in the breakdown of German economy and in face of mass unemployment which affected the whole nation, workless Jewish youths of Berlin and anywhere else in Germany had no hope of being gainfully engaged in, say, Essen or Dusseldorf. She talked over the problem with the little band and other groups of youth; and the conviction flashed on her that the way out was here and now to get the Zionist youth of Germany to the Palestine National Home. There, in the Land itself, they should prepare themselves for productive occupation. They should live for the community and not for themselves, give up commerce or profession for cultivation of the soil, throw off inhibitions and

frustration, be upstanding workers, and fulfil their Zionist faith. In the words of the Jewish folk-song: "Go to the land to build and be rebuilt." She inspired the group with her own convictions, and they carried them to their Zionist youth societies. The solution was to form groups of boys and girls who should leave their homes and get their preparation as agricultural pioneers, not in training camps of Europe, but in collective and co-operative villages of the Land of Israel. Preparation of Jewish adolescent youth of Europe for life on the land, in the Land and in a community—that was her and their vision. Out of that need of a score of young Zionists sprang the Youth Aliyah.

Frau Freier turned to the apostle of the Palestine Halutz who was in Germany. He was an Italian Jew, Sereni, a member of a collective settlement, to which the adult pioneers went out when they had completed their training. Sereni welcomed the idea, and commended it at once to the Central Labour Organisation in Palestine. They, in turn, were sympathetic to the plan and laid it before the local councils in the communal villages—known as Meshakim. They received a favourable response from Ain Harod, Geva and Dagania, three of the "collectives" in Northern Palestine. A decisive advance was made when the general assembly of Ain Harod in June, 1932, adopted a resolution declaring their willingness to receive a youth group; yet it was to take the better part of two years before the first party actually arrived in the settlement. The ardour of the youth and the persistence of Frau Freier had to surmount one barrier after another. But the generous response of the young collectives, their will to garner children, as it was called, gave a sure hope.

It was necessary in the first place to persuade the Zionist Organisation in Germany to give the modest financial support which was required; and then to obtain precious certificates of immigration for the group. For the Government of Palestine rationed narrowly the admission of labourers. The German Zionist leaders were doubtful about the plan. It was one thing to prepare young men and women in training centres of Germany, and when they were thoroughly qualified, to assist them to get to the Land; but it was another to take boys and girls who had not reached the age of discretion—against the will of their parents in many cases—move them from hearth and home, and experiment with their transformation in a new climate, a new life and—what mattered more to them than it would to another community—a new *Weltanschauung*. They were doubtful also about education in and through a Kibbutz. In the end the committee decided that it could only participate in the scheme if a responsible body

in Palestine, like the Jewish National Council, would sponsor it. An indirect approach was made to secure the backing of the leader of social work in Palestine, Miss Henrietta Szold, whose name was a hall-mark of reliability. That condition could not immediately be satisfied. But Frau Freier, irresistible and possessed, went first to Holland and France, to enlist support; and then to Palestine to tackle the Council and the collective settlements herself. And she convinced them.

The difficulties with the certificates were for a time insuperable. During the three preceding years, since the Arab outbreak in 1929, Jewish immigration to Palestine had been greatly reduced. The Administration had misgivings about the Zionist policy and the extension of Jewish settlement on the land; and the long-drawn unrest, which followed the commission of enquiry and the issue of the Passfield White Paper about Immigration in 1930, had induced suspension. It was only in 1932, after a new High Commissioner, General Sir Arthur Wauchope, was appointed, that the doors began to be opened, and the pressure from thousands of waiting Haluzim for the limited allocation of workers' certificates was immense. It is to be further remembered that at that time the Jewish population was less than 200,000. On the other hand, Palestine was the only country to which Jewish immigrants could then turn with the assurance of being able to work. The United States, still in the trough of the economic crisis, had closed her doors; the democratic countries in the West gave limited asylum, but would not allow the alien to be employed, except in special circumstances.

The German Zionist Federation, sceptical for a time about the scheme, would not provide the means. The youth bodies, however, with greater faith than their elders, were fired to undertake the effort of raising funds for settling a group; and a ray of hope was given when Dr. Lehmann, the Director of the Children's village, Ben Shemen, came to Berlin in the summer of 1932. The Palestine Administration allotted immigration certificates for children and young persons admitted to educational institutions, provided their maintenance was assured; and Dr. Lehmann was prepared to receive a dozen of the German youth. That was not altogether the ideal, because the group wanted to be a part straightaway of a collective Kevutza. But it was on the way; and it would be a beginning of action. So towards the end of 1932, the tiny party set forth from the Anhalter Station in Berlin, sped on their way by a crowd of young Zionist hopefuls singing Hebrew songs. That was the first Aliyah of the Youth Aliyah—not yet so named.

Youth societies which shared the Palestine enthusiasm got together to follow up the first step. They were to prepare a band of fifty young persons who should get their first training in Germany, and to raise the funds for their emigration and maintenance in cases where the parents could not pay. Associated with the Aliyah group were the Aid Society which supported Dr. Lehmann's institute, and a similar body, which supported another children's institute, Ahavah—meaning "love"—presently in Berlin, but looking to Palestine as its physical and spiritual goal. The three principles of the education in that institute were Judaism, Socialism, and Zionism. And the director, Beate Berger (who died in 1940), had a capacity for building. She had started her orphanage in Germany, but for years she had planned a larger home in Palestine. With the representatives of the Zionist bodies the three groups formed in June, 1933, a new association which should collect the funds for the two institutes and the new enterprise. To mark their serious resolve, they formed it as a legal corporation. Their immediate aim was to provide for the preparation and migration of a group, and to negotiate with the German Zionist Federation for the certificates. The Association for Children and Youth Aliyah came to legal birth on March 5th, 1933, the day on which Hitler seized power, and the Nazi bands processed through Berlin shouting: "Death to the Jews." As often in Jewish history,

*The eternal world
contains at once the evil and the cure.*

An outstanding characteristic of the Youth Aliyah is that it has been a movement of the youth, for the youth and by the youth. It was not a philanthropic idea of the elders, but in its origin and development a plan of the young for their own salvation; and the sense of comradeship was and is inherent in it. The members of the Aliyah are to each other "Haverim"—comrades. And while the elders doubted, and the Government of Palestine was hesitant, the young people had faith. The first bands who went out to Palestine were members of the Zionist youth bodies in Germany, began their social education in those bodies, and have a certain unity of outlook.

Events were more compelling than argument. Within a few weeks of the founding of the Association, the Nazi revolution was working a revolution of outlook, alike in the Jewish youth, in the Zionist Organisation and in the non-Zionist leaders of German Jewry. Palestine shone forth, not as a romantic ideal, but as a

beckoning immediate home. The political head of the Jewish Agency in Palestine, Dr. Chaim Arlosoroff, though of Russian origin, was educated in Germany, and was himself an offspring of German Zionism, one of the early enthusiasts of the Blau-Weiss and of the Zionist Socialist Workers (Ha-Poel Hazair). In May, 1933, he came to Berlin to inspire and direct an organised movement of migration on a large scale. He had become in Palestine one of the heads of the Labour Federation, and for two years had been the spokesman of Palestine Jewry to the Government. He had won the complete confidence of the High Commissioner; and he was accepted by the Yishuv. Before the Zionists in Germany he laid a bold plan, which included the migration of thousands of Haluzim and thousands of the youth, on the lines of the scheme of Recha Freier. The programme of bringing boys and girls from school to Palestine, to be agricultural apprentices and to receive physical and spiritual preparation in the communal and co-operative villages, found in him the convincing advocate.

To the Berlin community he said: "We must plant in the heart of every Jew a feeling of solidarity, a love of the nation, of its history, its tradition, its language. Every individual must make a profound reckoning with his soul. Freedom must be proclaimed for the heart until it reaches once more that pride, that naturalness, that gave the world the cadence of the psalms. Every Jewish heart must return to that state. Either you will be such a Jew, or you will not be a Jew at all. If anyone has sundered the mutual bond with the nation, let him go his own way. Whoever has preserved that bond must strive for self-renewal. The Messiah waits for all who strive." In his vision a score of institutes sprang up, which should receive some thousands of young persons; and he was confident that he could get the help of the Government of Palestine for the fulfilment. With that conviction he returned to the Land. A few days after his arrival he conducted the High Commissioner to Ben Shemen, and there spoke with him of the plan. That same night he was murdered as he walked with his wife along the beach of Tel-Aviv. His vision was fulfilled, but it took five years that followed to fulfil it.

The liberal world was stirred that summer by the outrages of Nazi Germany, though the Nazis had not yet manifested their full bestiality. Sympathies were warm in England, America and the European democracies. Miss Szold, now convinced by events and by Recha Freier, went to London to attend a conference on measures of help for German Jews; and from London to Berlin. With the heads of the Youth Aliyah and the German Zionist

Organisation, she worked out the first practical steps and revived faith in the idea, which was declining because of the rebuffs. Two groups should be prepared immediately: one for settlement at Ain Harod, the other for settlement in Rodges, a co-operative village of the Orthodox Jews. They should go for their first preparation to the hostels of the youth movement. It was originally desired that they should serve the preliminary apprenticeship in Denmark; but the Nazis refused permission to leave Germany. Other groups of younger children should join the first batch at Ben Shemen, and others go to the Ahavah home, which should be transplanted to Palestine.

Miss Szold, whose special province was education and social care, worked out also the educational plans for the groups. The young people who were enrolled should be taken to camps and training centres in Germany for a few weeks, and there watched and selected. Each group of fifty would have its teacher or instructor, the Madrich, who might eventually accompany them to Palestine. He or she was an older person, with experience of teaching or social work, often knowing both German and Hebrew; in a few cases a pioneer from Palestine. The broad plan of education, which was adopted in 1933, and has remained the basis ever since, was that the group should be apprenticed during two years to a village in Palestine. The village as a whole should be responsible for their housing, their nurture, and their education. It would receive for their maintenance from the youth body a fixed modest sum each month; and in addition it would be equipped with the housing required for the group. After the second year the Movement would no longer be answerable for the maintenance. The young people themselves would be responsible for their destiny, and choose their way of life as a group or individuals. The arrangements for those who were placed in schools and institutions were similar, except that younger children were to be maintained and educated for more than two years. The essence of the contract between the Aliyah and the village or the school was that on both sides obligation and responsibility were collective. Before they set out from Europe, the formation and destination of each group was fixed. They were a Hevrat Noar, a Youth Association, which formed its own collective within the host settlement.

In Palestine an advisory council was appointed to choose the places for the training of the bands of children, to consider the methods of instruction, and to work out by trial and error a novel task of pedagogy. From the outset it was stressed that they were engaged not in an emergency work of rescue, but in a

movement which should grow and develop according to its own ideas and ideals.

Three leaders of Jews from Germany, who were already established in Palestine, and active in the planning of settlement, were devoted from the outset to the cause of the Aliyah, and linked it closely with the Jewish Agency. They were Dr. Ruppin, the architect of colonisation, Dr. Werner Senator, who was a member of the Executive Committee of the Agency, and Dr. Landauer, who had been secretary of the German Zionist Federation and became Treasurer of Youth Aliyah.

Back in Palestine, Miss Szold started on the struggle to get the certificates, the life-saving certificates, from the Government, and on the detailed negotiations with the villages about nurture and work. It was necessary to make a contract with each settlement which was prepared to receive the parties, about the conditions of their housing, their work, their education. The youth would form part of the working community, but they must receive also continuous and original education for a new life. Their quarters must be hygienically of a high standard, and in most cases must be built and fitted. For the young settlements had not hitherto provided for a reinforcement of the kind. And all these needs must be executed with the least delay. The Jewish Agency, which submitted to the Palestine Administration proposals for immigration permits every half-year, asked the Government to grant 500 certificates for youths under eighteen. In November the Administration granted 350, with the provision that each holder should be under the age of seventeen, and that for each a guarantee should be given of £4 a month until the age of eighteen. It required also that the Palestine Office of the Aliyah should receive and distribute individually the certificates for the youth. The conditions were accepted; and the Youth Aliyah Organisation, then centred both in Palestine and in Berlin, set about the gathering of guarantors. The cost of each child, journey and two years training, has averaged £100. The organisation in Berlin was under the direction of Mrs. Michaelis-Stern, the daughter of a famous professor of psychology, and Mr. Schattner, a member of Ain Harod, the settlement which received the first Aliyah group.

The movement to save the children appealed in Germany and outside Germany to influential circles which had hitherto been aloof from activities for Palestine. Besides leaders of social work and of Zionism, it enlisted in Germany many who were not Zionists, among them Mrs. Lola Hahn-Warburg, the daughter of the President of the Hilfsverein; and Wilfrid Israel, who was

head of a department store in Berlin and a sympathetic pioneer in social and international movements. Those who worked for the Aliyah, like those for whom they worked, were a band of comrades (Hevrah). A fellowship of service was formed, and has steadily grown. The adult workers of the movement were an impersonal team who shared the spirit of the youth, and were conscious of a great cause. They stood up to the Gestapo in Germany, who put every obstacle in the way of rescue.

The president of the central Jewish organisation in Germany, which had been brought into being to prepare Jewry for the new circumstances, Rabbi Dr. Leo Baeck, issued an appeal to save the children. Palestine offered a healing from the deadly miasma of anti-Semitism and from the sick feeling of helplessness. It was brought home to all, non-Zionists as well as Zionists, that boys and girls could grow there to freedom and service. In Palestine itself there was a corresponding eagerness to receive. The call to deliver the children disposed of the doubts and misgivings which were roused before the doom of Hitler was uttered. A combination of idealism and practical necessity launched Youth Aliyah as a popular movement, much as in the previous generation it had launched Hebrew as a living language. From the outset Youth Aliyah roused the solidarity and the enthusiasm of all sections of the Jewish people. It was not just a philanthropic or a sectional activity; and it became quickly a popular cause. Originating among the German youth, it enlisted first the interest of the community in Germany. Then for its beginning of fulfilment it secured the interest of the Jewish communities in Palestine, not at once of the central organisations, but of the villages of Socialist workers who felt a collective and individual responsibility to save the youth of Israel.

After a little, it won the support of the central institutions in Palestine, England and America. The Central British Fund for German Jewry and the Economic Refugee Corporation, in particular, made available the means for building homes in the villages for the reception of the youth. As the movement grew, it found groups of friends all over the world. Their first function was to collect funds; but when the need came for something more, they found temporary homes for the training of the young people in their countries, and formed a chain of companionship for parties making their life pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

Recha Freier, who had at first been a voice crying in the wilderness, but had carried her burning conviction to the collective villages during her stay in the summer of 1933, returned to Germany to direct the work of gathering the youth. She had

the vision of saving ten thousand children. They registered the applicants, first in tens, then in hundreds, arranged the preliminary training in hostels and on farms, and collected funds from those Jews who had still a relic of their wealth, and were now alive to Palestine's capacity for saving children.

CHAPTER 5

THE MOTHER OF YOUTH ALIYAH

HENRIETTA SZOLD CAME TO the work of the Youth Aliyah in her seventy-fourth year. She brought to it the accumulated experience of her generation, the heritage from her parents and her own ripe wisdom. The redemption of the children has been the crown of a lifetime of service to her people and humanity; and all that went before it can be seen as a preparation—which the Movement would call *Hakhsharah*. She had written to a friend twenty-five years earlier, before she came to Palestine: "Deep down at the bottom of my heart I have always held that I should have had children, many children. It is only in rearing children that minute service piled on minute service counts. In my life details have confused the issue; they have not gone to make a harmonious and productive whole. In a mother's life ability to lose one's identity in details is the great thing for the future of mankind." She was to have children to care and foster—many children, hundreds and thousands. She was to be to them a mother, and to display in superlative measure her ability to lose identity in details.

Miss Szold was born in 1860, in the city of Baltimore, where her father was rabbi. It was the year also of the birth of Theodor Herzl, the founder of the modern Zionist movement. He was a child of Budapest, and Rabbi Benjamin Szold too was a child of Hungary. The Szold family had been for generations land-owners, and cultivated their vineyards with their own hands. He was a brilliant boy and was ordained as a rabbi in his youth. Throughout his life a lover of liberty, he fought in the revolution of 1848 in Vienna, and was banished from the city. He returned to his native Hungary, and married a woman who was also born and bred on the land. At the age of thirty he accepted a call from a synagogue in Baltimore. The love of the land, the love of liberty, the love of order in freedom, and dominating them, love of Judaism, were the guiding principles in the Szold home.

In Henrietta's childhood the American Civil War split her state of Maryland, which had sympathy with the Southern cause; but her father, needless to say, was a stout supporter of the cause of the North, the freedom of the slaves. In an address on her eightieth birthday she noted that her life began with the war for the delivery of slaves in America, and had gone on to a war which will also bring deliverance to an enslaved Continent. When she graduated from the high school she became a teacher. But, combined with that, she was her father's secretary. He was distinguished amongst American rabbis by his knowledge and love of Hebrew. For him the Hebrew Bible was "the living oracle of God," and he wrote in Hebrew a commentary on the Book of Job, which was a unique contribution of Hebrew scholarship in the New World. His daughter learnt Hebrew from him, and she taught in his religious school, and taught Jewish history to the Jewesses of Baltimore.

She had the instincts of a writer and a scholar, but even stronger than them was her will to help any suffering part of her people. When in the 'eighties the stream of refugees from the Jewish persecution in Russia began to arrive destitute on the shores of the United States, which had then less than a quarter million Jews, she threw herself into the work of helping them to become American. That was another apprenticeship for her work fifty years later, in aiding the Jews fleeing to the Palestine home to become Hebrews. Again a passage in one of her Palestine letters is illuminating: "Does it not seem unfair that a person should be subjected to the same barbarous experience twice in a lifetime? Exactly fifty years ago I was engaged in America on behalf of the East-European Jews in the same makeshifting as we are now engaged in on behalf of the German Jews in Palestine." Yet Palestine was already dawning in her consciousness as the goal. Another noble-hearted American Jewess, Emma Lazarus, the poet who wrote the inscription on the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbour, was moved at that time by the misery of the homeless exiles to proclaim her faith in the fulfilment of Israel's faith. Henrietta, with her background of Jewish knowledge, from that time onwards was a pioneer of the practical love of Zion in America. She was one of the founders of a small group, *Hevrat Zion* (that is, the comradeship of Zion), of Baltimore, which was the first Zionist society in the continent. It was formed in 1893, three years before Herzl published his *Jewish State*.

An understanding American Zionist woman has pointed the contrast between the way Zionism came to her and the way it came to Herzl. To him the vision burst as an overpowering,

imaginative, tempestuous revolution of the soul; to her it was a natural development of her home life and her study, an ideal to be pursued with austerity, restraint and deliberate modesty. She combined American Jewish idealism and method with a German seriousness. She had in everything an ascetic devotion to duty and an infinite capacity for work. By this time she had ceased to be a professional teacher, and had taken on a task of Secretary of the Jewish Publication Society of America, a body for producing and distributing popular literature about Judaism and Jewish life. One of its first enterprises was to commission Israel Zangwill to write *The Children of the Ghetto*. For twenty-three years Henrietta Szold gave herself to the society, correcting and editing every manuscript with meticulous accuracy, translating herself a score of works from German to English, and ever postponing, until it was not written, the book that she had been asked to write on mediæval Jewish literature for women. We have a flash about her in these times from the outstanding Jewish scholar and religious leader in America, Solomon Schechter. He stayed with Rabbi Szold in 1895, and wrote: "His daughter is an excellent Jewish scholar, but very nice and feminine." Some years later, when he was persuading her to undertake a book for the Publication Society, he wrote: "She has a conscience, she has a style, she has a soul." She became a student at his Seminary, so that she could compass Jewish learning.

In 1909 she had overstrained even her own immense powers of work; and friends provided means for her to travel with her mother to Europe and to Palestine. That jubilee year was the turning point in her life. She wrote to her family: "How much I shall have to tell you of the beauty, the interest, the problems of the Holy City. If I were twenty years younger, I would feel that my field is here. As it is, there are heroic men and women here doing valiant work. If only they could be more intelligently supported by the European and American Jews! The colonies and the cities of Palestine have taught me so much, that for the first time in my life I feel the impulse to speak out in public. Will you hold me to it when I return?" She was held to it. She came back with the conviction that "if not Zionism, then nothing—extinction for the Jews."

She and her mother had been moved by the wretchedness of the conditions of the life of the Jews in the Holy Cities. At Tiberias the children had only sticks for legs. Her mother, from whom Henrietta inherited the practical talents, urged her to turn into an active, practical society a group of American women who met to talk about Palestine and its problems. So Hadassah—as

the group was named from the Hebrew for Queen Esther—came into being. She put before it a definite and simple object: to send to Palestine qualified, American-trained Jewish nurses. At the same time she became Secretary of the Agricultural Experiment Station, founded in Palestine by Aaronson, a Jewish colonist of genius who had discovered wild wheat in the hills of Galilee. Not content with that double task, she was Honorary Secretary of the Federation of American Zionists, and set herself to the task of getting their chaotic affairs into order. A woman fashioned American Zionism and made it the bearer of standards.

The Hadassah circle grew under her hand from an intimate group of friends to a nation-wide organisation with hundreds of local "chapters." For motto it adopted the words of Jeremiah: "The healing of the daughter of my people." It should combine with the study and propagation of Zionism—the contemplative activity—the furtherance of health work amongst women and children in Palestine—a practical activity. That was the interpretation which she gave to the traditional Jewish adage; study of the Torah with the way of the land. The first two nurses set out to Jerusalem in 1913; and Nathan Straus, the philanthropist, who was on his way to Palestine, established a settlement house for them in Jerusalem.

The World War, which for a time threatened to destroy the infant Jewish Home by the privations that Allied blockade and Turkish rapacity imposed, and reduced the Jewish population of 100,000 to half, inspired the Hadassah to a greater effort. As soon as the southern part of the Holy Land was redeemed by Allenby's first triumphant campaign, the American Red Cross sent to Jerusalem a splendidly equipped unit of medical help and relief. The Zionist women must emulate that; and provide for the healing and rebuilding of the Yishuv a medical unit with physicians and surgeons, nursing sisters and infant nurses. They set out immediately after the Armistice in 1918. She who had carried through the work of organisation did not accompany them. It is a strange reflection that she had difficulties in obtaining a visa from the military authorities. But in 1920, when the unit was struggling with adverse circumstances in Palestine, she was summoned to the rescue. She came for two years' service, as she thought, and found, reluctantly at first, a new home. Her mother had died in 1916. Though she was attached with an extraordinary affection to her sisters and America, she was attached with an equal devotion to the task which fell to her hand. Henceforth it was her life to bring to the growing home in Palestine the standards of health, of social care, of order and

intellectual integrity which she had made her guiding star in America.

She served a hard apprenticeship before she was oriented in the country. A few months after she arrived she wrote: "I have always, in my thought at least, compared Palestine to a monastery. Its inhabitants claim a living from the outside world. That is bad enough, but the responsibilities of its inhabitants—those who assumed any—are worse; they have no life of their own. One belongs wholly and completely to a protean public. Whosoever will, claims your time, your strength and your means." And later: "I may as well confess that the life here does not make me happy. As was to have been expected, again there is a generation of the desert which will have to perish in order to fructify the soil. First a synthesis of the Jews gathering here from everywhere will have to be brought about, and then we may have to expect the life here to have some gracious aspects. And yet things are not so bad that you must insist upon my coming home." But she adds: "You are right when you say that the field for me is America and not Palestine. Palestine is for the young." What wooed her in those early days to the new-old country were on the one hand the beauty of the landscape and the atmosphere, on the other the joy in the Jew as a productive worker.

She was in her sixtieth year when she arrived, and after the celebration of her sixtieth birthday she reflected: "I am happier because I have conquered my disappointment at our people. We are still on the lowest rung of the ladder—we had thought ourselves near the top! When one recognises that the whole climb is still ahead, one cannot be disappointed; one simply has to resolve to work harder. . . . I am at this late day undergoing what I may without exaggeration call the biggest experience of my life. Here one is brought face to face with naked realities. Elsewhere they are disguised by the complexities of civilization. The grooves and ruts are drawn for one living in New York. Here you are bound to think out every step. It won't do to say that you will act as you always acted before." And yet the lack of system, the near chaos which marked the first immigration after the war, was a long trial.

She found comfort in the Socialist groups of the Kevutzot, who in their rough camps were making the roads, draining the swamps and, for the more fortunate few, ploughing the soil: "That's what one feels in Palestine chiefly—a strenuous stirring, a reaching out for something that eludes. . . . It is now understood that our overnight transformation of Palestine into the Utopia of the Zionist dreamers is a foolish expectation. We have armed

ourselves with patience, which after all is more potent than the conjurer's swift tricks. With the growth in normal thought and action has come more gentleness and considerateness. I hasten to say that we are not yet angels, not yet even righteous and true; I still find many a reason for blazing indignation—you know my capacity for that."

She knew how she could work, whether in Palestine or in America: "I am so constituted that I see no promise in any movement which is not built up slowly, bit by bit, each layer of stone and each trowelful of cement tested by every known principle of organisation." It was an added challenge to her will for efficiency that she must master Hebrew, not only as a tongue to speak, but as a language in which she could express all her thoughts accurately and integrally, and she accomplished it. In September, 1921, she records: "I made my first impromptu speech in Hebrew, rather haltingly, but I managed to get a few ideas into Hebrew form." She was a delegate to the Zionist Congress in 1922, but was ill at ease in the political discussions. Then, for four years, because of family cares, she returned to America, paying occasional visits to Palestine.

In 1927 she was called to a greater responsibility, to be one of the three members—the triumvirate—of the Palestine Executive Committee of the Zionist Organisation. She was the first woman to serve in that capacity, and her modesty made her fight against nomination "like a tigress." She held the office at a tranquil time, when "the land had peace" under the second High Commissioner, Field-Marshal Lord Plumer. The writer of this book, who then held office in Palestine, recalls among the brightest memories of the years 1927-8, the meetings of the Executive Council of the Government where Henrietta Szold would present requests of the Jewish Agency. She was nearing her seventieth year; Lord Plumer had just attained it. The two veterans were inspired with an equal devotion to the land and its peoples. While the country was tranquil, the Jewish population passed through a difficult period because of the economic crisis in Europe. For a time the Yishuv was faced with serious unemployment. That was just the difficulty which Henrietta Szold was made to tackle; and she and Lord Plumer fitted like hand to glove in concerting measures of constructive relief. The Zionist Conference in 1929 was reckless enough not to re-elect her to the Executive. But in 1931 she was called to another office in Palestine which she felt she could not refuse. She was to take charge of the Department of Health and Education on behalf of the Jewish National Council, the Vaad Leumi, which was the

representative body of Palestine Jewry. She had already taken the lead in transferring to the Council the responsibility for the health services which Hadassah had initiated. The people could now stand on their own feet, and the Labour Confederation, which comprised the whole body of workers by hand and head, was becoming the compelling instrument for a good and equal social order. For the workers life was well arranged; but a class of the under-privileged, the poor, the delinquent children, the aged men and women of the old pious Yishuv, and sometimes the helpless immigrant who could not find a niche—these lacked the social help of the modern State, and it was her mission to organise it for them.

She was appalled at first by the difficulty of the task: "When I came to Palestine, I acted as though I were an expert on medical affairs. Fate made me pretend to be an expert on educational affairs in 1927. And now, in 1931, having passed the Psalmist's term of years, I dare go into another field in which to expertise is imperative. But what am I to do if experts refuse to tackle the job, and tackled it must be? The situation is becoming daily more chaotic."

After two years of wrestling with the problem, she decided that she would go back to her family and her first home, and to the leisure for the intellectual life and the contemplation for which she still yearned. Fate—that is, Hitler—ruled otherwise. Suddenly the Yishuv was called to take a leading part in saving German Jewry: "I should have felt like a renegade if I had not remained to do my bit, seeing that my many years in Palestine naturally mean experience of the sort useful in the emergencies created by a large immigration." She was outstanding as the person who could direct the integration of the new Aliyah. Her thought was not at first for the march of the children, but for the coming of all sorts and conditions, young and old, from Germany: "In Palestine it is obvious that our young community there, almost in the first stages of development, will receive an accession of trained, experienced forces whose coming will be of decisive influence upon us. Some of them are saturated with the Zionist ideology; their assimilation to Jewish life will proceed naturally, without effort. Many of them, however, are as visitors from another planet. They know nothing of the Messianic hope, even in its moderate form of Zionism; they are strange to the whole gamut of Jewish ideas and principles." As we have seen, she was asked in 1932, before the sword of Damocles had fallen in Germany, to take the responsibility for placing adolescents in the Palestine settlements to be trained. Then she declined it, because

she did not see the way clear. She had already on her hands enough of problems and to spare.

In 1933, however, she wrote of the children arriving: "They are already beginning to come, and without their parents—who cannot come away without risking the loss of every penny they own. How we are going to provide places for 3,000 to 4,000 children passes my comprehension. And I am not thinking of the funds. I am thinking of the forces of organisation at our disposal." When Arlosoroff, returning from Europe in the summer of 1933, with the plan for the Youth Aliyah, was struck down by the assassin, again the call was made to her, and she did not decline it. Marvin Lowenthal, who has written the story of her life from her letters, applies to her the words of the chapter in Proverbs about "the woman of worth": "She lays her hands to the spindle and her hands hold the distaff." To her it fell to weave the new social fabric, the Youth Aliyah, out of the strands of life.

The murder of Arlosoroff depressed her more than any other event that had happened in Palestine; cut away, as it were, the conviction of the moral foundation of the National Home. But she found comfort as before in the discipline of the new task. As we have seen,¹ she went to Germany to establish an orderly relation and a practical system of work between German Jewry and the Yishuv. "I found much confused organisation, no understanding of Palestinian conditions, and much talk at cross-purposes. I don't flatter myself that I straightened out the whole tangle, but I think the path is somewhat levelled." In her unchanging and obstinate modesty, she visualised the task as a mass of little details, each to be exactly carried out. "When I view even this new undertaking of mine, the children's immigration, which ought to throb and pulsate with life—when I sum it up in its day by day aspects, what is it but just that, superior clerical work?"

Recha Freier had given the movement its ardent impulse amongst the youth. She had won for it the support—in principle, as they say in Palestine—of the Socialist settlements. It was for Henrietta Szold, the affectionate and understanding planner and the inspiring worker, to turn that impulse and that acceptance in principle to an ordered movement. One woman was the dynamo, the other the skilled pilot. As with the Hadassah, so with the Youth Aliyah, she made it not a party achievement, but a religion of good works. She exercised an influence over all the sections in the country and over communities rent still with party factions. She could satisfy the most profoundly religious pietists

¹ See Chapter 4, p. 39.

and the most liberal and "godless" Socialists. She comprehended herself all the aspects of Judaism gathered in the Yishuv; and was the one person in Palestine or outside Palestine who could unite the sections for a common task. In her aged youth—the age of might, in the Hebrew phrase—she held a position like that of Queen Victoria in England at the end of her reign; or, to make perhaps a juster comparison, like that of Florence Nightingale in her old age. But with the great difference, that she retained the simplicity and the industry and the touch of the common man and child as completely as when she was beginning her public work fifty years before. She lived in one little room in a *pension*, with a small shelf of books as her companion. She worked untold hours, she journeyed in bus or car to all the settlements in Palestine to confer with the Vaad, and work out every detail; and whenever and wherever she came, she brought assurance of an exact plan and certain fulfilment. She was the surviving prophetic figure of the leaders of Zionism: legendary in her lifetime. The extraordinary achievement was that, coming to the movement as an old woman full of wisdom and experience, she understood the child better than most of the teachers. She had that touch of genius by which a man or woman remains in heart a child.

CHAPTER 6

THE FIRST FIVE YEARS, 1933-1938

AT FIRST THE EXPANSION of the Youth Aliyah was slow; but the march achieved straightway a certain rhythm. It was not till February, 1934, that the first group of fifty boys and girls for Ain Harod arrived at Haifa on the S.S. *Martha Washington*, the *Mayflower*, so to say, of the young settlers. A month later another group arrived—girls, who were placed in the horticultural school at Talpiot near Jerusalem. After a few weeks a small party followed for the Ahavah home, which was to be moved from Berlin to Haifa Bay. A building was being erected by the side of the workers' village that bore the name of the national poet, Bialik, and till it was ready the children were lodged in a home in Haifa. In June, the first group of the religious youth arrived, and were placed in the village of Rodges (one of the few Jewish settlements which had transplanted a German village name). They were followed by a band that were to serve their apprenticeship in a communal village of the Emek, Tel Joseph. Another group of girls, belonging also to the Orthodox section, went to a

training centre of the Mizrahi in Jerusalem. So the 350 certificates granted by the Government had been distributed. The Aliyah was a going and growing enterprise and embraced all sections. The Jewish Agency presented its request to the Government for another 350 certificates for the youth, to cover the winter period 1934-5; and this time the request was granted in full. One communal settlement after the other offered a home for the children; the parent collective villages of Dagan, A. and B. (as they were undramatically distinguished), Kinneret, on the shores of Lake Galilee, Mishmar Ha'Emek, the stronghold of the Young Guard, and Givat Brenner, which was the original outpost of the German Halutz. As the bands multiplied, the directors of the Aliyah had to find fresh places for their preparation. For it was a guiding principle that in each place a limited number should be taken as apprentices. In that way only could they be integrated into the local community. At the same time, the original master settlements received fresh groups when the first apprentices finished their two years' training.

One of the new homes that was acquired had a special appeal. It was an outpost by Kfar Giladi, the most northerly Jewish hamlet in Palestine, on the lower spurs of the Lebanon. Here the Russian founder of the "Halutz," Captain Trumpeldor, fell when the outpost was attacked in the Arab rising of 1920. For fourteen years the place was abandoned. Then Youth Aliyah obtained the consent of the owners of the land, the Palestine Jewish Colonisation Association, to reconstruct it for the youth. It bears the name of Tel Hai, the living hill, and was again to merit its name.

It was, however, exceptional to place the youth in habitations separated from the villages of adult workers, since they could not, in those conditions, have the full sharing of the collective life. And though the young people did their agricultural work in the lands and with the members of the village, so it proved at Tel Hai.

The co-operative villages of smallholders at first held back, because they were doubtful about the mingling of the children from Germany with their own. But they were convinced by Recha Freier that they should take their part. Nahalal, the large co-operative village of the Emek, led the way; but it was not till 1936 that the first group of fifty of the Aliyah arrived there. They were lodged, not in separate children's houses, but with families which had been carefully chosen. They had their own club-room and school-room, where they gathered for lessons and recreation with their instructors. Later the co-operative villages were favoured for the apprenticeship of children from

families of middle-class Zionists, who were not ardently Socialist as the others. What was common to the groups in the collective and the co-operative settlements, as well as to those in the children's villages and the schools, was the decisive aim, to nurture the sense of a community. The young people were not just temporary members of an economic society, or pupils of an institution; they were living as members one of another, and it was essential to foster the feeling of friendship between themselves and between the young group and the older society.

The year 1935 marked the peak of Jewish immigration and of agricultural and industrial expansion in Palestine. The number of Jews admitted to the country with certificates from the Government exceeded 60,000—and some thousands came without certificates. While almost all the other countries in the world were still in the trough of economic depression, Palestine prospered as never before. It had become the primary country of refuge and the home of promise for Jews from Germany and Poland. During that year of plenty groups of the Aliyah continued to arrive, and the movement took on a larger aim. It aspired to bring to the country boys and girls, not only from Germany, but from the neighbouring countries and from the larger reservoir of Poland. There the Jewish youth, though not menaced immediately by expulsion or legal discrimination, were subject to what was called the anti-Semitism of things, and to constant frustration, and denied the opportunity of work. The longing for Palestine had the force of a religion for the younger and older generation. A Committee of the Youth Aliyah was founded at Warsaw. But the Palestine Government would not grant special Aliyah certificates, till 1938, to any but victims of Nazi persecution; and the Polish children could be admitted only to agricultural and technical schools which had the privilege of bringing pupils from abroad. Many of the refugees from Germany, however, were Polish subjects; and special consideration was given to their children, particularly to those in Paris, which then was the principal city of temporary refuge. After a time, too, the training places in some of the Kibbutzim were recognised by the Government as schools, so that other than German members of the Aliyah could be admitted to them.

The organisation expanded with the enlargement of the aim. The Zionist body recognised it as a separate instrument for the rebuilding, which was entitled to carry on its propaganda and raise funds. The appeal of the children touched a chord of the Jewish heart in every land where Jews were gathered. Not only the large communities of the United States, Great Britain and

the British Dominions and the Continent of Europe, but even tiny groups in countries of Central and South America—and Japan—formed committees for the Youth Aliyah.

The Government of Palestine for its part recognised this youth immigration from Germany as a particular class to which certificates should be allotted. In that connection, two officers should be mentioned. One was Captain Foley, who during all the years of Hitler's persecution till the war was Passport Officer at the British Embassy in Berlin, and brought to the cause of saving the young Jews a personal sympathy and unfailing helpfulness. The other was Mr. Eric Mills, Commissioner for Migration and Statistics in the Government of Palestine, who had to consider each half-year the proposals of the Jewish Agency for immigration, and allot the certificates to the different classes. Though it was seldom possible to grant all the certificates asked for, he did give to the applications for Youth Aliyah a human scrutiny. And his Deputy, Mr. Edwin Samuel, was equally helpful.

In August, 1935, the biennial Zionist Congress was held, and a report was given by Henrietta Szold about the new class of immigrant settlers. Since the last Congress over 600 children had been placed in the collective and co-operative villages. That was a small number compared with the total of the Haluzim, the older pioneers who had been admitted as workers, many with their children as dependent members of the family. But the youth bands had a significance of their own; they were an earnest of the continuing redemption to come, and every party which departed from Berlin, Paris or Warsaw strengthened the hope of those who were left behind that their turn would come.

Immediately following the Zionist Congress, the first conference of the International Youth Aliyah Organisation, which comprised delegates from every community, was held at Amsterdam. Miss Szold laid before it her definite plans for the development of their enterprise. In the first days she had her misgivings about its achievement. She had written in 1934: "My new job is growing under my hands from day to day. It deals with children, but it is not child's play; and it is a serious experiment." And again: "The transfer of the youth from Germany is not only chock-full of time-consuming details, but the undertaking is so overwhelmingly responsible that I sometimes am all but mastered by the impulse to flee from it. Recently I took a trip to the Emek settlements in order to choose the places to which the next group to be organised is to be directed. The discussions on the spot, the visualisation of what is involved physically and spiritually in the transplantation, took away the breath, as it were, of my mind and soul. The

beginnings are naturally difficult, and naturally weighted with responsibility. On their success hangs the fate of what should be a movement of several years' duration." It was to be something more and something longer.

The first year of settlement removed her doubts and reinforced her resolves. And now she would face a larger task, converting an emergency undertaking into a movement to include thousands of young people who must be removed not only from Germany; in fact, to save the young generation of European Jewry. She was in her seventy-fifth year, but she was rejuvenated by the work for youth. One practical encouragement was given soon after the Amsterdam conference, when she went to America to renew the appeal. The Hadassah Organisation of the Jewish Women of America, the instrument which she had created herself to bring the highest standards of health and well-being to the Yishuv, resolved to make the Youth Aliyah their cause. Their original purpose of establishing infant-welfare centres, modern hospitals and clinics in the Land of Israel, had been achieved; and now they were free to undertake a fresh enterprise, and be guided again by the woman who had turned the debating cell into a nation-wide movement of 100,000 members. And within eight years they were raising over a million dollars yearly for the effort. Following Hadassah, the Women's International Zionist Organisation, with its branches over Europe and the British Dominions and its hostels in Palestine, took the Youth Aliyah under its wing. It has raised £200,000 for the cause.

A greater effort was indeed urgent. At the time that the Amsterdam conference was sitting, the Nazi party were holding their annual Tag at Nuremberg. Hitler, while he reviewed the armed bands of the S.A. and the S.S., was still talking smooth words of his desire for peace with the nations. The object of hate was not yet the Czechs or the Poles, but only the Jews. He announced a series of decrees which openly deprived Jews of their citizenship in the Reich, proclaimed fresh penalties for inter-marriage between Jew and Gentile, and imposed new and bitter humiliations. The hopes hitherto entertained by a large section of Jews in Germany, that they could adjust themselves to the life of a National-Socialist Reich, were rudely dispelled. The threat of economic ruin stared them in the face; and the assurance that their young generation could take no part in the life of Germany as self-respecting, upstanding men and women was sealed. The Nuremberg decrees roused the world to fresh consciousness of the Nazi war on the Jews. The American High Commissioner of the League of Nations for the Refugees from Germany, Mr. James G.

MacDonald, on resigning a little later his office, pointed out in a letter to the Council of the League that, if the nations were to avert complete catastrophe for the "non-Aryan" minority in Germany, they must take bolder action. But the letter was in vain: a nine-day wonder. The Gentile public was shocked for a little; but the statesmen relapsed into their attitude of looking away. The Jews of the world, however, were alive to the need of a much larger and more sustained effort to get out the young generation.

Miss Szold went from Amsterdam to Berlin, where all was prepared to welcome the mother of the Youth Aliyah. Though the Nuremberg decrees had almost stunned them, the community went through with the programme of welcome. But she was concerned with the practical measures of planning and rescue. She was touched by the gratitude of the community and the hundreds of parents who came to see her and enquire about their children in Palestine; and she felt that she was linked up with each and every one of them.

The immediate request to the Government of Palestine was for 350 certificates for the children. They were granted. But before all the children arrived, a new obstacle appeared which was for a year to check the hoped-for expansion. In April, 1936, Arab riots broke out in all parts of Palestine. The riots grew quickly to Arab revolt; murder and massacre stalked through the land. The Arab nationalist leaders had excited the fears of the people that they would be ousted from their country, deprived of their land by the rising tide of Jewish immigration. They were supported by the unscrupulous propaganda and corrupting funds of the Fascists and Nazis, who were out to make trouble in the Middle East for Great Britain by any and every means. The Administration, hoping to find a way of conciliation, refrained for a time from taking strong measures to quell the outbreak. Attacks on the Jewish villages, as well as murderous assaults on English officials, were constant. At last, after six months of what was described as "revolt by leave," the British Government, which had announced that they would send a Royal Commission to enquire into the cause of the troubles, secured a suspension of hostilities. The Commission came out to Palestine towards the end of 1936; it took evidence from a host of witnesses for two months, and then returned to England to ponder on its report. It was nearly six months before the report was issued. During the period of revolt, of enquiry and of reflection on the enquiry, the Palestine Administration curtailed entry into the country. For the greater part of the time the Youth Aliyah could not obtain a grant of further

certificates for the hundreds of children who were waiting expectant in their training camps in Europe. Miss Szold passionately and persuasively tried to remove the ukase; and she could not be altogether denied. But only one hundred places were granted at the end of 1936, till the report of the Royal Commission was issued. At last in the summer of 1937, the stream was allowed to flow again.

The Zionist Congress that year, which met at Zurich, and had to take the momentous decision on the Commission's proposal for partition, received again from Miss Szold the report on the growth of the Aliyah. The number of children in the country had gone up from 600 to over 1600. Many more villages had agreed to provide training places for the youth. Ten groups of the first "homecoming" had finished their apprenticeship, and were working either in independent Kevutzot or attached to the older settlements. In that respect the experiment had justified itself beyond expectation. Over three-quarters of the boys and girls who had come to Palestine and passed their training had decided to stay as agricultural workers. Most of the other quarter, too, were productive workers, but in industry. Miss Szold could write of the Conference: "It was balm to all who had been through the struggle of the Congress, and to me who could not get rid of the thought of the spectres in Germany. The work was constructive, hopeful, unpolitical."

Dr. Ruppin, the architect of the Palestinian agricultural colonisation, and the champion of the collective settlements when others were sceptical, pointed to the service which the Aliyah was already rendering to Palestine in return for the service which Palestine was rendering to the youth. It brought to the villages a class of young persons between the ages of fifteen to eighteen, which had hitherto been noticeable by its absence. The early founders of these Kibbutzim were now in their forties and fifties; their children were under fifteen years. Yet all age categories should be represented in a healthy human society. The boys and girls from Europe gave that age group; and they had become devoted workers, some of them in the Kibbutzim where they had trained, others in different Kibbutzim, others again in their own Kevutzot, where they worked shoulder to shoulder with the young people of Palestine, the Noar Haovod. They were "flesh of our flesh." In the sober and exact report on the work of the Aliyah Bureau in Jerusalem, Miss Szold told how they had built up in the land the class of instructor-guides (Madrachim). Germany could not provide an adequate number of young Jewish leaders. So they turned to the task of training

them in Palestine. "In this way we get leaders who are both well acquainted with Hebrew and the local conditions, and who are able to establish co-operation between the youth and the adults."

The Central Office in Jerusalem kept the personal touch with the growing family by constant tours. "Sometimes we take direct part in Sihot (the ritual talk), and thereby learn from the juveniles themselves what is puzzling them, what they want to see done. Those wishes which are formulated during the last six months of the two years' training period are of special significance. By this time the boys and girls have begun to think over what they will make of their lives when they leave the settlement." She had to tell of the testing period through which the groups had passed during the last two years of civil strife. "When the young people wanted to join in the duty of defending the settlements, I was asked whether this was to be allowed. I have no children of my own, and I am not sure if I acted rightly when I said: 'Do with these children as you would with children of your own.' I am thankful to say that no harm came to any member of the Aliyah." Only those who had been at least a year in training were allowed to take their turn in keeping watch and ward. In the troubled years that followed, the record could not be kept intact, though of those in training only two were injured. A few of the graduates fell with the other defenders of their homesteads; but the near peril gave a fresh and added savour to the life. Here they were not just passive victims, but defenders of a community and a cause. The direct influence of the realities of life was a moral and a practical value in the education. And it is reported that the defence exercises gave a stimulus to the study of Palestine geography and natural history.

Sacrifice is an essential act to link the individual with the movement and with the community of which he claims to form part. And sacrifice, the gift of part of oneself, was inherent in the agricultural youth community. A wise Frenchman of our day, a flying officer who has reflected on the causes of the collapse of France, has written. "Only he can understand what a farm is who has sacrificed part of himself to his farm, who has struggled to make it beautiful. A farm is not the sum of its parts; it is the sum of its gifts" (St. Exupéry, *Flight to Arras*). That truth was understood in the Palestine Kevutza.

The growth of the Aliyah called for fresh educational enterprises and the planting of fresh settlements. Although the large majority chose an agricultural training, and were faithful to the ideal of working the land, it was a principle of the Central Office that the individual bent of the boy or girl with a marked talent

should be encouraged. So where the talent was for technical work, they should get the right education for its development. Places were found in the existing technical schools at Haifa (Herzlia) and Tel Aviv (Max Pine School). But to add to them, a technical school was built in 1937, exclusively for the Aliyah, at Yagur, near Haifa, which had been an original settlement of the German Halutz. It had an entrancing situation, under the lee of the Carmel and facing the golden-green Bay of Haifa, dotted with its Jewish workers' villages and factories. The school was erected as a memorial to Ludwig Tietz, the founder of the Central Jewish Youth Organisation in Germany. It was designed by Erich Mendelsohn, a famous Jewish architect exiled from Germany. It was equipped with the best machinery, partly brought from Germany and partly the product of the factories of Palestine; and it provided for three classes, each of sixty boys. In their first year the apprentices learnt to do the simple repair of industrial and agricultural machinery and boat-making. While they were pupils in the school, they were an integral part of the life of the large Kibbutz which contained many German members. Their day was divided between four to six hours in the workshop and three hours of study. They gave a class of skilled workmen who were of value, not only to the Aliyah settlements, but to the whole country. Other boys found their place in the new trade-school which was erected in the grounds of the "Technicum" at Haifa, and, beside the normal crafts, initiated a marine department to prepare its pupils for life on the sea, as fishermen, seamen and boat-builders.

The conquest of the sea followed the redemption of the land, and had a special appeal to the youth. The opening of the port at Tel Aviv, an outcome of the Arab revolt in 1936, that cut off the Jewish township from Jaffa, gave a great impulse to this fresh enthusiasm. Palestine had received groups of veteran Jewish boatmen and port-workers from the Levant, particularly from Salonika, where, in the Turkish régime, Jews had done all the work of the port. But it was a new thing for youths arriving in the land to turn to the sea. Yet, within a year or two, groups of the Aliyah formed their own maritime settlements of fishermen on the open sea or in the Lake of Galilee,¹ and of boat-builders. The marine school trained mates and sailors, who served either in the tiny Jewish marine of Palestine or on English and other ships. Scores of them were soon to have their part in the sea

¹ One such group was stationed at "Genossar," hard by Magdala, the home of Mary Magdalene; another on the Eastern shore at Ain Geb by the ancient Tarichea. As in the days of Jesus, the Jews were again fishermen in Galilee.

warfare, among the young Jews who were enrolled in the British Navy or merchant marine. Something of that spirit of adventure which made the glory of Elizabethan England possessed these Jews of Europe in the land of their fathers.

The hold-up by the Government of immigration certificates had the effect of increasing the proportion of the Aliyah placed in schools. For the embargo did not extend to the same degree to schools. And for the Orthodox groups, particularly, the provision of training in schools was acceptable because the religious requirements were there more easily satisfied; and moreover they lacked agricultural settlements. So the Evelina de Rothschild School for Girls in Jerusalem, an educational institute of the Anglo-Jewish community, received a group of Orthodox girls. It was a sidelight on the world-wide scope of the Aliyah that the Jewish community of the Argentine made themselves responsible for this group in the Anglo-Palestine School. Another school in Jerusalem found a place for a similar group of boys and girls. A third was founded with the help of the Aliyah in order to provide for younger children under fifteen, who should get general education before proceeding to their apprenticeship for life. And the Agudah established a Talmudic School (Yeshiva), in a village of Sharon, Bne Brak, which had a famous rabbinical tradition.

The agricultural training of the Youth who belong to the orthodox section, the Bachad and the Agudah, called for particular care. Nearly one-fourth of the Aliyah was so composed; and when the migration started, only one agricultural village in the country could make provision for them. The larger part of the strictly observant Jews were an urban population; and only in recent years had any agricultural settlement been founded by the Mizrahi. To place the majority of boys and girls in trade schools conducted by Orthodox bodies in the towns was not a satisfactory solution. A major enterprise was decided: to create a children's village, similar to the village of Ben Shemen, for the religious young people of the Aliyah who were from the party of the Mizrahi Zionists. The enterprise was brought to fruition by 1936, when Kfar HaNoar HaDati (which means "the village of the religious youth"), near Haifa was opened, and gave a place for nearly 200. The youth have their own farm of 150 acres. In their cultivation of it they observe strictly the Mosaic Law. So they would not graft the trees, and no work at all is done on the Sabbath day.

Other opportunities for agricultural training of this section were furnished by the older pre-war villages which had retained

a core of religious farmers. Other boys again, to the number of over 100 at a time, were placed in the oldest Jewish agricultural school, Mikveh Israel, near Jaffa, and others in a younger school of the kind in the Northern Sharon. By 1940, when the total number of the Aliyah was 7,000, 1,400 of the religious youth were included amongst them, and were distributed between a score of villages and schools. By that time the religious graduates had planted their own groups in Kibbutzim in the Jordan valley, one named Tirat Zvi, after a rabbinical herald of Zionism, and the other S'deh Eliyahu, after another pious pioneer. The Aguda also had established two agricultural villages in Judea.

Again, it was a principle of the Central organisation that every religious and political outlook should be fully respected; and the Youth Aliyah included groups of every section. It was not easy always to do justice to the equal and—in some groups—separate enthusiasms for traditional Judaism and for the Socialist religion of work. But the principle was “to hold on to the sacred differences,” and it was applied in the training centres of Europe. So in England, Holland and the other countries, special groups of the Bachad were formed. They included religious Haluzim with the younger persons of the Youth Aliyah. In England the religious-Socialist-Zionist movement was spread to young people who were not enrolled in the Aliyah, but who wished to share in the preparation for Palestine; and by 1942 it numbered altogether 800 in its centres. The principal training-place was, appropriately, a Quaker College near Birmingham, which was designed as an adult school for English rural workers.

The second Conference of the Youth Aliyah at Zurich marked a definite progress since the first; and in that period of lull which followed consideration of the report of the Royal Commission hopes were high that the homecoming of adults and the young would be speeded up. Again, however, recession followed quickly on hope. In the autumn of 1937, a campaign of murder and arson was renewed by the Arab rebel hands, who more boldly challenged the authority of the Government. Throughout the following year Palestine was in a state of civil war. The children of the groups of the Aliyah might no longer leave their villages and wander through the country. Those who had finished their training were enrolled in the militia of self-defence. Those, too, who were receiving their training lived in an atmosphere of war and preparedness. Nevertheless, the urgent need for getting the young out of Europe, and the recognition of the genius of Palestine for regenerating the young, sustained the Aliyah as a growing movement. The rape of Austria by Hitler in

March, 1938, created a fresh urgency. The brutalities of the Nazis in the old Reich paled before the brutalities of the Austrian and German Nazis against the 200,000 Jews in the "Ostmark." While the ruin of German Jewry proceeded steadily from 1933 to 1938, in Austria social and economic ruin was carried out in a few weeks. All Jewish enterprises and property were "Aryanised." None could misunderstand the doom—exodus or extermination. Amongst the nearly 900 certificates which were allotted for the youth in April, 1938, the Government of Palestine allowed a number to be used for young people from Austria; and the Aliyah straightway set itself to the task of choosing and equipping boys and girls who were in the most desperate need. The Austrian Jewish youth was in a way more prepared and more Palestine-hungry than the German. It included a larger element from Eastern Europe, and it had foreseen for years the hopelessness of a future in the native or adopted land. Thousands were waiting for the chance of a certificate; but only a tiny fraction could receive.

Barely was the Aliyah office established in Vienna, when fresh S.O.S. calls had to be met. The bitter drama of the Sudetenland, Berchtesgaden and Munich was played out in the latter part of 1938. Another Jewish community—some 40,000—was handed over to Nazi brutality. And the 350,000 Jews who were in the truncated Czechoslovak Republic could not expect to be free much longer from the yoke. The Youth Aliyah was quick to set up its office in Prague, to cope immediately with the thousands of refugee children from the Sudetenland, and to prepare for the rescue of the Jewish children in Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia. Finally, at the end of this *annus horribilis* came the fiery writing in the sky of Germany itself. The murderous pogroms of November against the Jewish communities everywhere in the Reich, as pretended retaliation for the shooting of a German diplomat by a frenzied Jewish youth in Paris, did at last bring home to the civilised world what it had tried not to see for five years: the will of Hitler utterly to destroy the Jews. And that belated understanding gave a new force and a wide expansion to the movement of Save the Children in Palestine.

CHAPTER 7

INTEGRATION

THE ARRIVAL OF THE CHILDREN in their Home was turned to a festal welcome. Their first and most vivid impressions should be joyful, and the newcomers should feel that they were wanted and loved. Most of the transports came to Haifa; and that fair city, set on and under the Carmel ridge, was a fitting portal to the Land of Promise. When they had passed through the examination of quarantine, Customs and baggage, many of the parties were taken to the immigrant house on the height of the Carmel to spend the first night. They were met by relations living in the land and by emissaries of the settlements to which they were to go; and almost invariably by Miss Szold. In the eve they would be thrilled by the sight of the town and port a thousand feet below them, lit up like a fairy-land: the Jewish villages in the crescent bay marked by their clusters of light, and the gleaming white power-house flood-lit by the seashore.

Next day they would take the train or drive through the Vale of Esdraelon, the Plain of Sharon, or the Plain of Zebulun, smiling areas of Jewish rural settlement, to their appointed village. Leaders of the Yishuv would drive with them, men like Joseph Baratz, the founder of Daganian, who was already a household word amongst them. And when they arrived at their village, they would be entertained at a feast. Then would come music and a speech from Miss Szold. We have her record of the arrival of one of the parties. She said that, when she came into the dining-room, she had the impression that a wedding was being celebrated; and, in fact, it was a wedding between the Land of Israel and the Jewish youth that had come from Germany. She went on to talk to her children more seriously of their life and responsibilities. For she was the spiritual guide, father as well as mother.

"When you belong to a movement which is inspired by certain ideals which it wishes to see fulfilled, it is the same as saying that you are member of a fellowship and have taken over your part of the responsibility for seeing that those ideals are realised. You are the bearers of the Youth Aliyah movement, and the Jews throughout the world are watching your doings with hope and confidence. They are helping you to realise the aim of the Youth Aliyah movement. There are three things which you should

always keep in mind as constituting the cornerstones of your life.

"The first is that you identify yourselves with the work. You will often have heard it said, before you set out on your Aliyah, that work plays a far more important part in the life of those living in Palestine than you had imagined. To identify yourselves with your work means to place your whole strength, each at the post assigned to him or her, in the service of national integration. This devotion to your labour should bring you joy and fulfilment. If you look upon work in this way, then the love for the country in which you will now live will take root and grow from strength to strength. It may be that to-day many things in this country appear strange to you. Coming from European countries, you are used to the sight of extensive woodlands, dark-green tones of Nature and, sometimes, in summer, the sight of grey, rainy sky. You were fortunate to arrive in Palestine in springtime, when the country is awakening to new life, when you discover flowers and fresh colours all around you. But, in a few days you will be astonished to see how the country changes and how the summer heat exerts the influence upon the entire life of man and animal alike. Try to understand the reasons for this, try to penetrate the language, read the Bible, and you will become one with Nature, with the people and with the customs and usages of our Eretz Israel.

"And then I want to say something about your responsibility for the fellowship in which you live. Each of you who exercises discipline, each of you who behaves towards his fellows in a friendly and comradely fashion, exerts an influence upon the level of the life of the group. Try to be tolerant and to help each other in everything that comes along. Then you will see that these two years of communal life will have served to enrich you immensely.

"In conclusion, I would like to ask you to do something which you will doubtless regard as being too obvious for words: think of your parents, write to them, let them take part in your experience. For they have not the good fortune of being able to begin life anew, and you have the duty to allow them to take a share in the things that make up your life here."

Each of the young people was given simple booklets about Jewish life on the land and some of its heroes. Each would plant a sapling in the wood of their village. So they symbolised the rooting of each in the soil of Palestine. When the festal reception was over, they went to their homes. Those were generally stone houses that had been built for them, simply furnished, but equipped with a library and with modern plumbing and

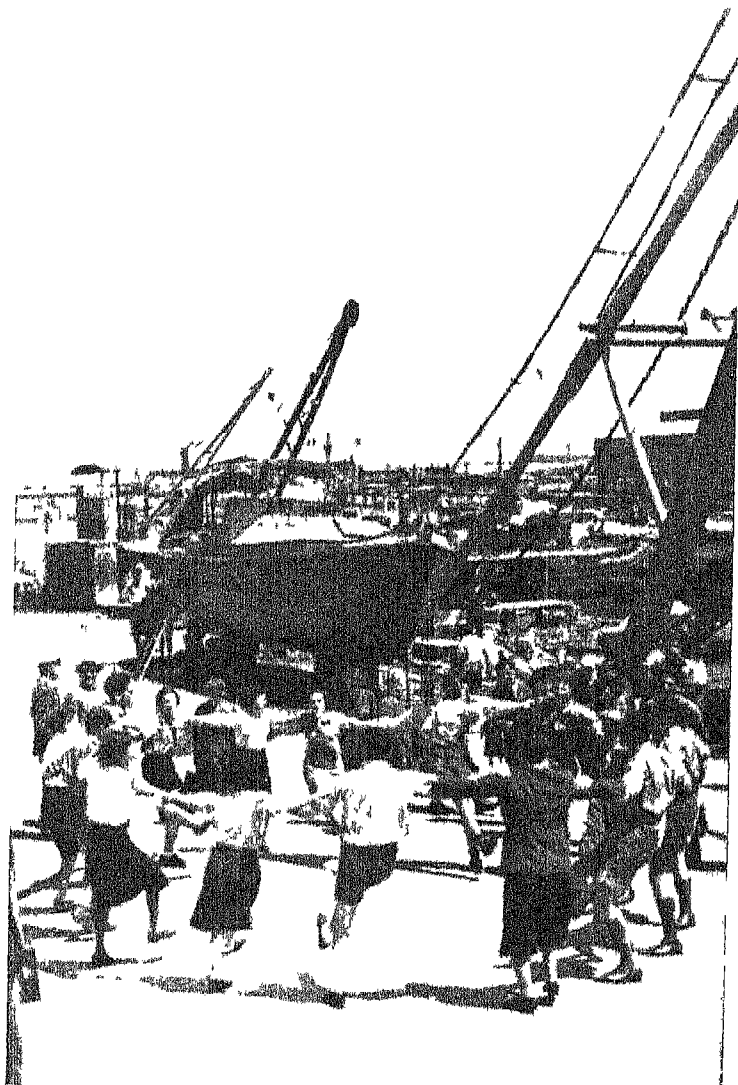


Photo: Weissenstein, Palestine.

Dancing the Horra on arrival in Haifa.

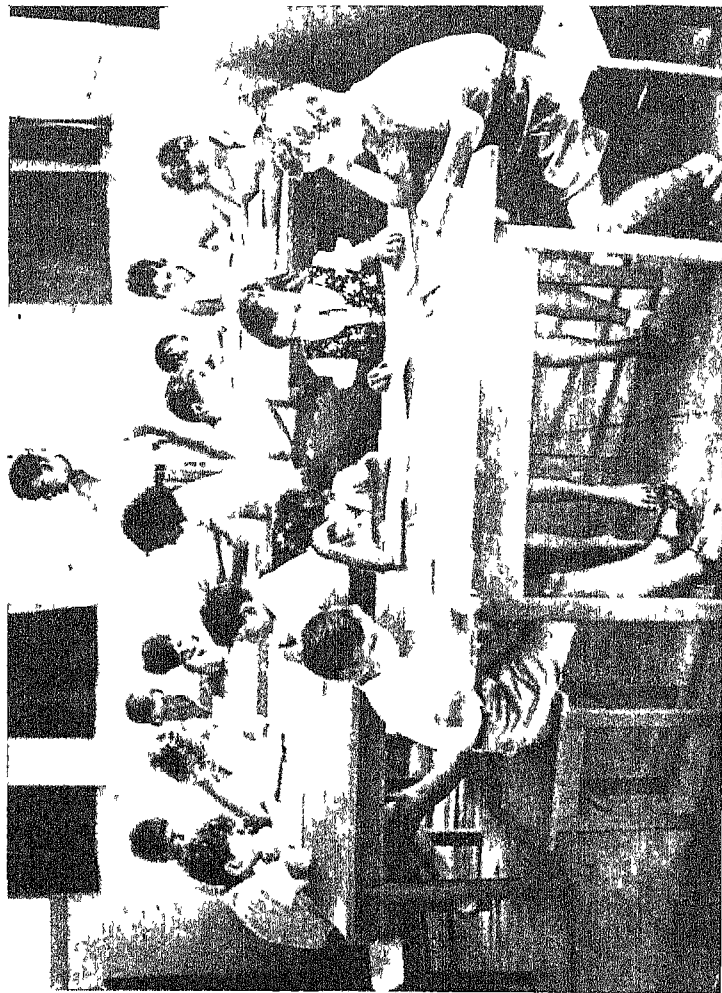


Photo Z 11 / Priest ne

Lessons at the Children's Home "Abavah" in Haifa Bay.



[Photo Zudek, Palestine.

Boys clearing stones from the fields.

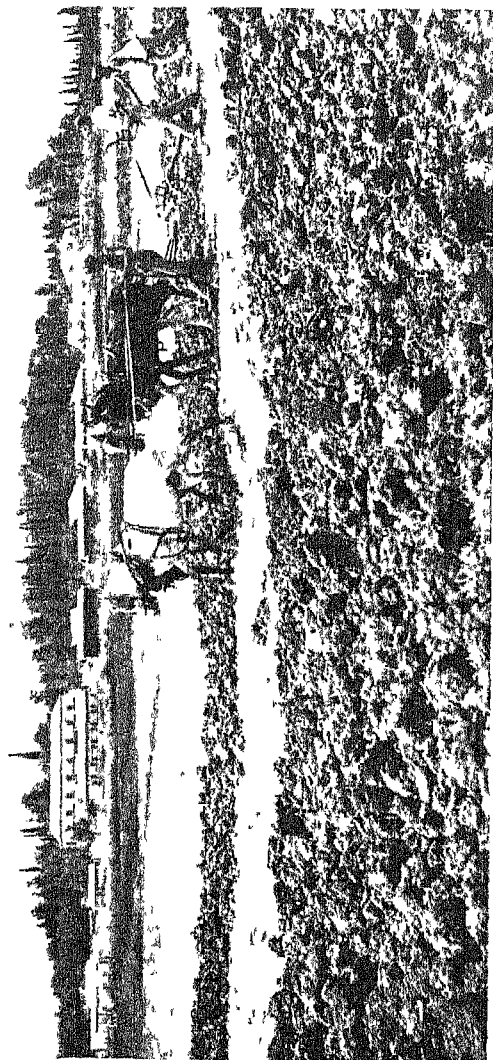


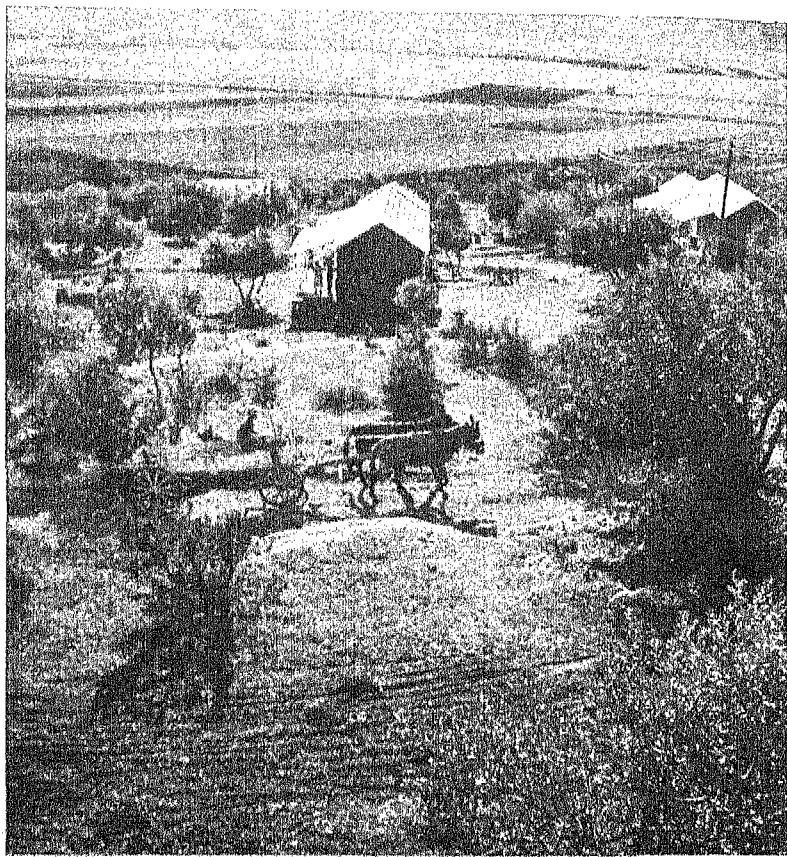
Photo Zadeh Palestine

Ploughing at a Jewish village.



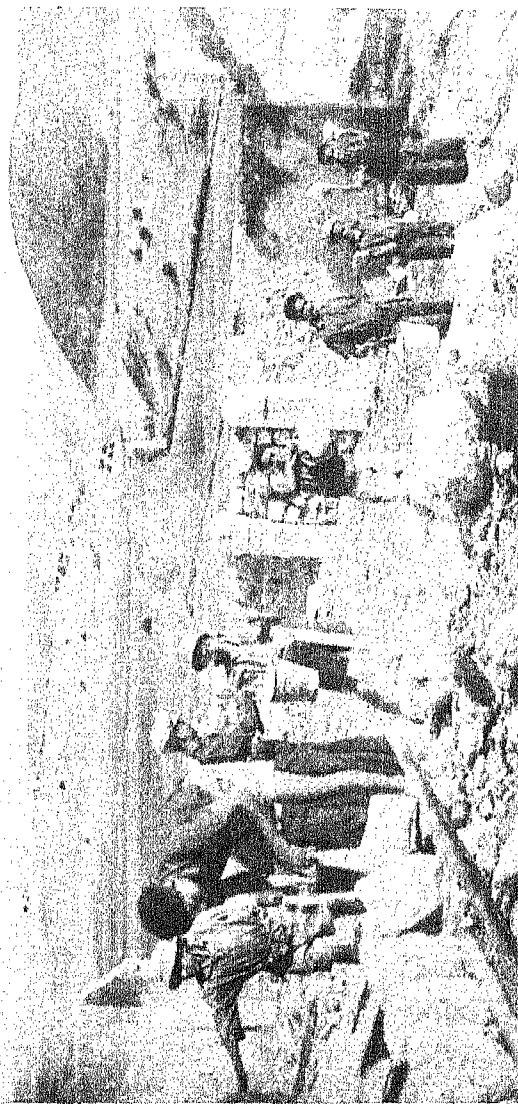
[Photo: Conner, Palestine

Threshing floor at Sdeh Yaacob.



[Photo: Gidal, Palestine.]

Part of the Children's Village, Kfar Hanoar Hadati, founded for the religious youth.



[Photo: Steiner and Cooverner, Palestine.

Yemenite boys building their houses at Shifcya.

כל הארץ היתה לנו תל-חי



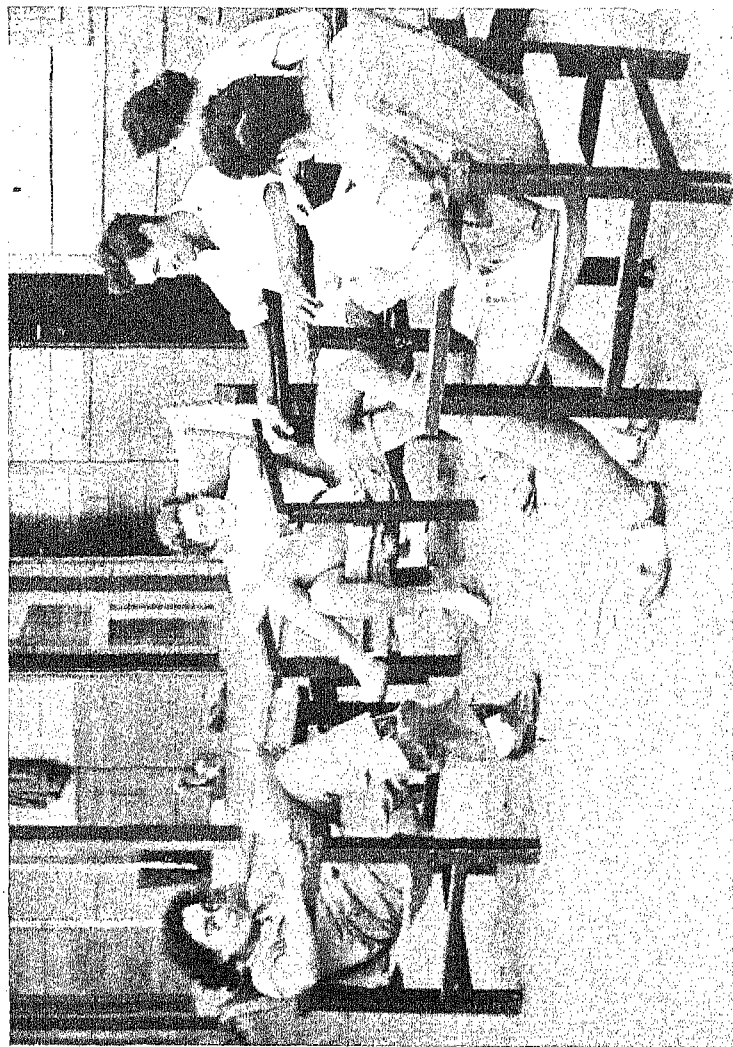
[Photo Weissenstein, Palestine]

Hebrew lesson at Tel Hai The Hebrew inscription in the picture means "All the land is for us a hill of Life." (Tel Hai.)



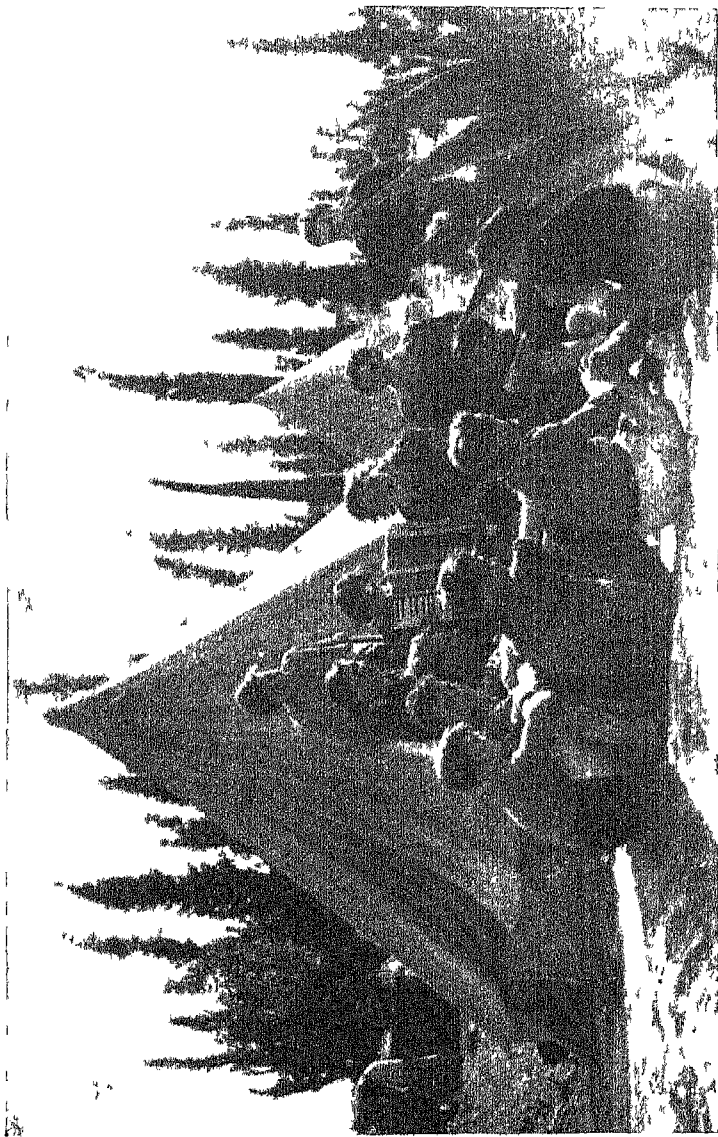
[Photo by W. J. Casey at W. J. Casey's]

Children's house and garden



[Photo: Zafri, Palestine.]

Sabbath rest. The chairs were made in the workshop of the Aliyah.



[Photo taken by Poles' 40]

Singsong by moonlight.



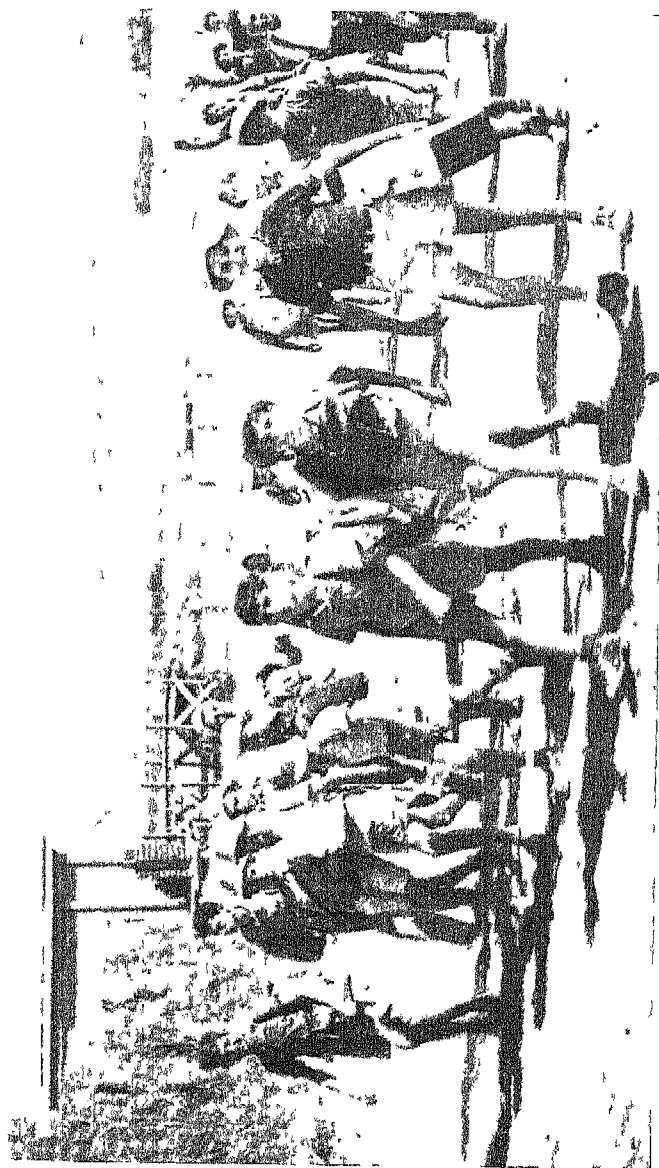
[Photo: Gidai, Palestine.

Miss Szold addressing the children at a village.

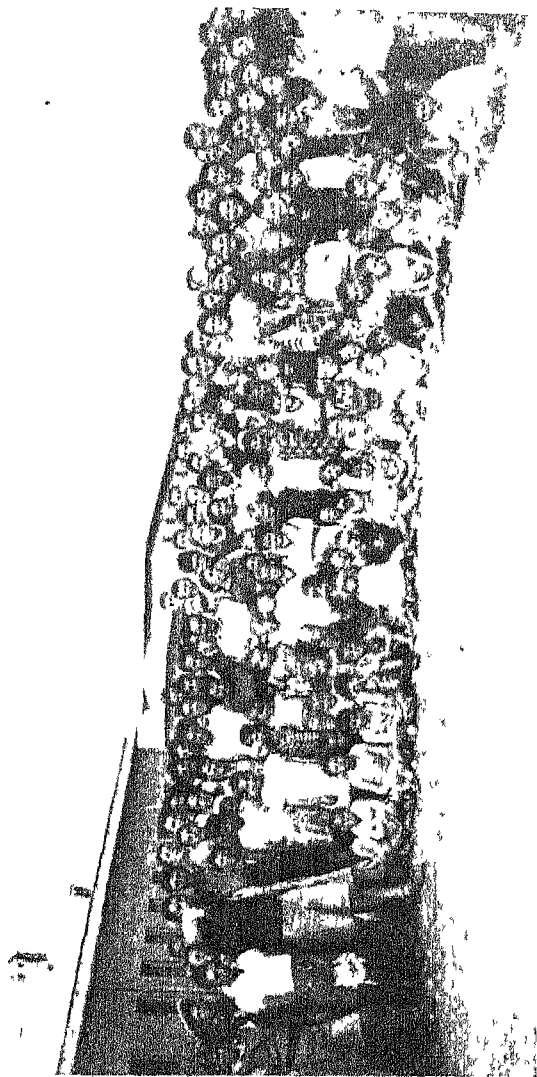


[Photo: Zadeh, Palestine.

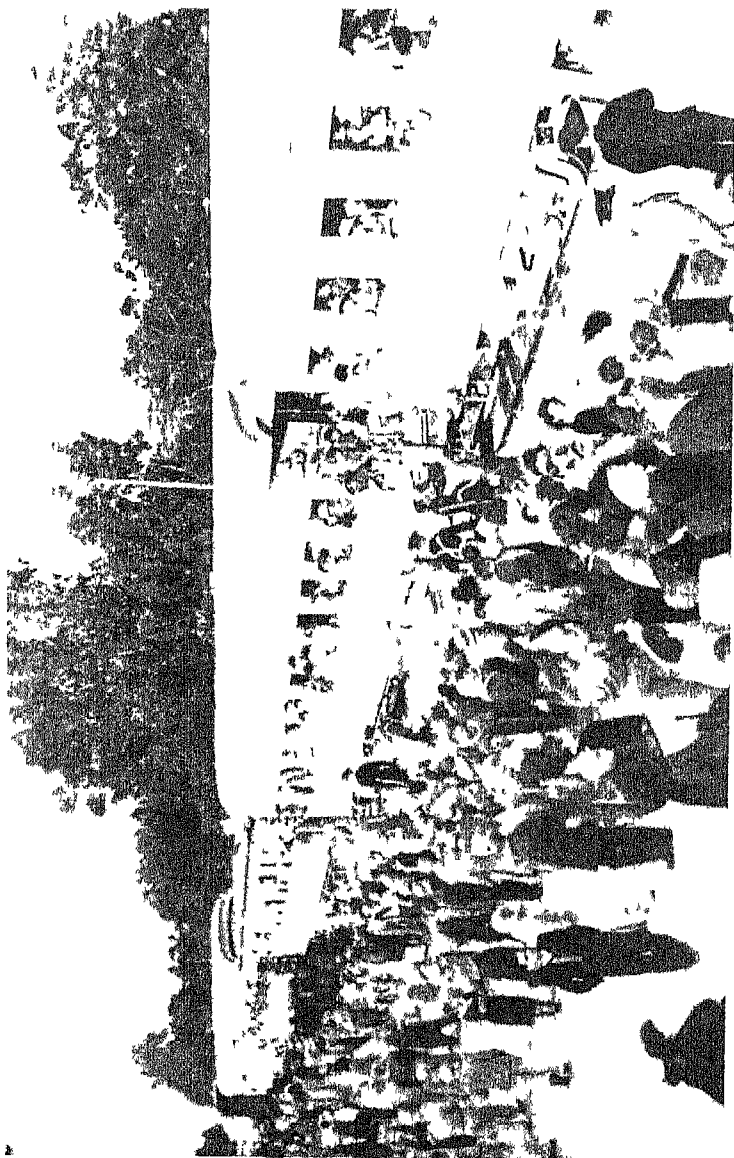
A fishing group of graduates of the Aliyah.



Palestine youth arriving at a village for their training.



Polish refugee children in camp at Teheran awaiting Aliyah to Palestine.



[Photo Rosenb 4-18, Palestine]

The Teheran children welcomed at the railway station in Palestine.

"showers" up to American standards. Miss Szold, the standard-bearer, saw to that. Of the placing of the first party she wrote: "I remained with them until the next day, saw them well bestowed, assured myself of the presence of screens, mosquito-nets, and sanitary installations. The Kevutzot were naturally not established as educational institutions, but they might have been if one was to judge by the way they make these fugitive youths at home and prepare for their training. It's a life of hardship, but not of strain. And the hardship has its compensation in the form of achievement, and the consciousness that both the hardship and the success are a common responsibility and a common advantage."

We have another description of a welcome in a boy's letter to his mother: "Friday was the welcoming feast for us. In the courtyard of the Kibbutz searchlights were erected. A platform was built with a piano on it. Around were tables covered with flowers. We had wonderful food and ices. Then the festival began. It was hard for us to understand that they should rejoice over *Jews* coming to the Land. But here is *our* Land. First the orchestra of Naaneh [his village] played. In the audience were 400 people. There was perfect quiet and everybody listened to the music. Then the choir of Naaneh sang songs of work in the Land. They welcomed us. 'Blessed are you in your coming, young wanderers.' In spite of the crisis, they have received us with rejoicing, and they expect much of us. We have been favoured; and we must show ourselves worthy of it. I spoke as the leader of the group. It was my first Hebrew speech, and before 400 people! I told them of our joy to come into a young Kibbutz amongst young men and women, and of our daily yearning to be with them. 'Now we are suddenly here. Now all for which we were waiting so long is fulfilment. Yet it is still a dream for us. Now we shall begin our true life in the Land of Israel, in the land of building.' And then the orchestra played again, and the choir sang, and we danced the Horrah again and again."

One of the groups had a welcome from Dr. Weizmann. He told them that there were two kinds of immigrants: those who bar the way for others who follow, and those who prepare the way for them. "We must belong to the second group, even as we are enjoying the fruit of the labour of those who came before us."

One of the first tasks was to acquire Hebrew, knowledge of Palestine, and the elements of Jewish history. In another letter Miss Szold described the fashion of their educational preparation:

"The youth will have received two years' instruction in the Hebrew language, and adjustment to the conditions of their new home through the study of Jewish history, Jewish literature and the geography of Palestine. They will have been made to understand what their work is because they will have had the auxiliary studies that make their work understandable—botany, physics and chemistry. They will have had the opportunity from time to time of wandering in excursions through the land with their leaders and teachers, who are ready to explain the nature of the land; ready to tell them the meaning of the social experiments that are being carried on in the laboratory of Jewish life."

It was a stroke of genius, or extraordinary fortune, to make the working village, and not an institution, the basis of the educational system, and so attach the instruction to actual life. The programme was worked out for the first parties by the instructors in consultation with Miss Szold and the Advisory Council. It was again good fortune that the head of the work was a woman who had been distinguished as student, who knew equally the old Jewish and the new Palestinian, the European and the American, cultures, and who was convinced of the need of education for the rural worker. In the settlements they had no experience of teaching adolescent boys and girls, and it was necessary to improvise courses and methods. We shall see in a later chapter¹ how the method of constant conference and discussion was applied to turn the untutored instructors to a band of expert guides of youth who have built up a constantly amplifying tradition.

Of the impression which the land and the life make immediately on sensitive minds, and of the gradual Orientation, the record of a girl-artist member of the first youth group in Tel Hai (which was referred to above),² though a little over-enthusiastic, is revealing. It was addressed to the comrades waiting in Germany. The first letter describes the journey in the motor-bus from Haifa to the new home: "Our land is beautiful, but of a different beauty from Germany—an austere beauty which is not refreshing, but overwhelming. It is a land of contrasts. Fine roads run through the country. Right and left the land is overgrown with thistles and cactus. The Jewish habitations are recognised by their green fields of maize, their cypresses, their tree nurseries. Everywhere you see mountains, not hills. Suddenly there is a sharp curve. Below us lies Emek Jesreel (Esdraelon), so beautiful that my tongue cannot describe it. A paradise of fruitful green,

¹ See Chapter 11.

² See Chapter 6.

covered with the white houses of the settlements. Our bus rushes down to Tiberias, passing by Arab villages and the black tents of the Bedouin. Another curve, and the Sea of Galilee is before us in its blue-green hollow surrounded by the mountains. In Tiberias we stop and drink red, green or yellow Gasos (lemonade). On we go. In a few minutes our bus begins to mount. The Arabs here are altogether different. In Jaffa and Haifa a noisy mob, in Galilee strong brown men; something of the citizen of the world, yet constantly on the alert. . . .

"Then we descend to the Lake Huleh. Here are no longer good roads, but a terrible bumping. We Jews are like the rocks of Galilee: men must reckon with us as with them. The parallel goes further. Is not our religion strong, shut in, firm, hard and inflexible? . . . We are at the end of our journey. High on a hillock something white shines out in the midst of the green. Twenty brown young people burst on us with a shattering cry. They are the Sabres [Sabre, meaning literally the cactus plant, is the name given to the children born in Palestine, and this group was to share its training with the native boys and girls]. Our Tel Hai is made up of seven houses. Each house has four rooms, and each room has four beds, a cupboard and a table. We live in four of the houses. Of the other three, one is the school, one the library, and the third is the store. In each room two Palestinians and two Germans [Jeckis they are called by the Palestinians] live together. We work in the field six hours a day. In the evening we have Hebrew lessons and classes."

A few weeks later she describes the villages around, and the ordering of their days. "Higher up lies Kfar Giladi, and beyond is Hermon, so near and so far, so clear and yet so distant. At night everything gets more mysterious, the stillness more still, the heavens nearer. We climb to Kfar Giladi and look back to Tel Hai, to our dining-room lit up, where they are dancing the Horrah; and then below to the Huleh Valley that lies quiet and forlorn. Then over the snowy crest of the Hermon comes a ray, white and strong. It gets stronger—and suddenly the moon appears, the white star, as it is called in Hebrew. When I see the moon, I think of you; for that is common to us. Kfar Giladi has 130 inhabitants. They work all the day. They look on us from Germany with mistrust as regards work. We must show what we can do, and that, at the moment, is not much."

Two months later the winter and rainy season begin. "How can one picture in Germany the winter of Palestine and Upper Galilee? It rains, but not for a half-hour, and not rain in which one can go out. Here it comes down madly for half a day. One

can only leave the house with a supreme effort. Everywhere is mud up to the knees. The rain dissolves our roads, so that since yesterday night no car can make the journey from Tiberias. . . . As to our group: the motto of everybody is work—Avodah. It is work for which we live. It rules our private life, and after work we bubble over. We dance without end. We like music, but we let ourselves go in the Horrah. . . . We practise self-administration. The group chooses several committees, each with its piece of work. The final authority is the general assembly, which chooses the committees and decides on their proposals. Then a council directs general matters: holidays, guest evening, celebrations and the education programme. The working committee distributes the tasks to the comrades. Lastly, we have an editorial board of our wall-newspaper.”

After a year the group takes stock; and they find that their relations with the Palestinians are not yet right, largely because the German-speaking youth have not been able to acquire Hebrew sufficiently. “In the first few weeks we had built up quite good relations; but then came a reaction. The good relations rested on a superficial knowledge. When the time came to form a better judgment, each side made a mistake: we were estranged by the peculiarities of the Palestinians, and lost the will to get to know them. The Palestinians did little to overcome this, and the difficulties which both had in the beginning, but which were greater for us, were underestimated by the others.”

In their mountain home the group at Tel Hai felt cut off from the general body of the Labour movement. “That is the greatest loss, and we have no possibility of talking out larger problems. We have not any direct connection with the labour movement in the land, as the comrades in the south have. To make up for it, we shall have to spend a third year of preparation. After the end of the first year of the work we began to speak of the future of the group. We thought that we should continue our common life; but it was still premature to come to conclusions. We felt that the old ‘colony’ of Yessod Hamaalah should be the new pivot of our group. We chose this spot because we could see two essential tasks to carry out: to have a foothold in that place and a part in the reclamation of the Huleh area, and to bring organised Jewish labour into one of the pre-war colonies.”

They make an excursion to Safed, the town in the hills of Galilee, which was the seat of the mystical schools from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, and is still inhabited by Chassidim, Jewish mystics of our time. They are struck by the difference between the religious youth and the young workers.

Why is it? "Because in the eyes of their elders no group of youth is good: because it is better to spend hours learning with bent backs than to be young with the comrades and be merry. Safed, the very name calls us to a great task, the creation of the working youth in Palestine, the redemption of the young generation."

She is impressed by the strength and "sovereignty" of the children in the collective settlements. "They determine the nature of their lessons, the whole order of their life. The teacher, a 'man of gold,' puts the plan before them. The children listen to him, and then decide. One should not compare the spiritual precocity of the children of the Kibbutz with that of the children of Germany and other lands. Here in the kindergarten they are already young adults, and in school they are men who direct their own life."

Towards the end of their training time, the group make another excursion: through Galilee and the Emek (Valley of Esdraelon) and Samaria. They feel themselves part of the land, and understand it better than when they made that first journey to their home. But the clouds are gathering. At Haifa they are lodged in the Technical School on Mount Carmel, and are enthusiastic over the beauty of the place and the completeness of its equipment. Suddenly somebody bursts in with the cry: "In the old town they are killing Jews." People rush about and cry out. "We must go down." Buses bring up the children and the old from the city to the Carmel. It was, indeed, a false alarm. But it was the prelude of the grave days to come. For a few months later the Arab revolt broke out in earnest, and the young apprentices on the land were tied to their settlements. No more excursions over Palestine. But this group had acquired the feeling of belonging to a landscape. And so did every group, even if it could not travel. For the scenes of Palestine were part of their heritage even before they came to the land.

Yet there were inevitably cases where the adjustment to the life of physical labour was hard. Most of all was it so when the boy or girl had some marked intellectual talent and retained an intellectual yearning. Many kept the habit of recording their thought, and writing it to their families in Germany. And we can often follow the individual struggle. So earnestly did they take to heart Miss Szold's advice to write that the collective settlements had to put a limit to the number of letters. For, postage being a communal service like any other, they could not provide for a daily mail from Palestine to Germany. One of the moving auto-

biographical stories recorded in the *Book of the Youth* is of a comrade who went out with the first party to Ain Harod in 1934, and, after the end of his apprenticeship, became a member of the first settlement of the graduate apprentices, and fell at their station, Alonim, in 1939¹, defending it against Arab attack. His diary, which he kept from the time when he first joined the Youth Aliyah, reveals the struggle of an intellectual, reared in an environment far from Jewish interests, to find his place in a community of manual workers in the Jewish National Home. In 1932 he was a student at the Karl Marx (Socialist) secondary school in Berlin. He was the only Jew in his class, and though other Jews were in the school, he did not know them; nor had he any contact with Jewish circles. He read widely in German literature, and only later found that some of these Germans were Jews. He believed that Zionists were narrow nationalists who were obstructing the realisation of the international Socialist ideal. When Hitler came to power, he realised that no future remained for Marxists in Germany, and he began to think of migration. But he took no steps himself. His widowed mother found out the enterprise of the Youth Aliyah, and asked him if he would go with a party to Denmark to prepare for migration to Palestine. He was willing to go anywhere, and Denmark appealed as a free Socialist country. So he registered with the Jewish youth movement, and joined a group in August, 1933.

He was depressed at the first meetings with the rest of the group. They were conventional in dress and manners, and he had no sympathy with their outlook. However, he went with them to a camp, not in Denmark—because the exit permit was refused—but in Germany, and waited months till at last the certificates came; and at the beginning of 1934 he set out with the first Aliyah party to Palestine. He had doubts to the end, and thought of transferring to a group for Holland to prepare there for migration to some other country. He is torn with misgivings whether he would be able to return to Europe and study at a university. A woman who had been one of the instructors of the Aliyah, but had abandoned it because she too could not fit in, talks with him: "You are not made for the Land of Israel. You do not know why we wish to go just to the Land of Israel; why we speak Hebrew; why we observe the Jewish festivals. We are not going there simply because we have no sustenance in Germany, but because we have not the possibility of developing here. If we go on living in Germany, we shall be turned to moral dust." She talks about the crookedness of Jewish life, and he reflects: "Are

¹ See Chapter 12.

not nearly all the Jews living in exile, and we may say that they are more or less warped? I confess that there may be some distortion of this kind which is founded on history. But I cannot yet recognise it. I agreed with what she said about myself: 'You are not one of the bad cases, you have begun to reflect, and you will go on to reflect what Zionism is. Perhaps you will find a way in the Land of Israel.' At present I do nothing except give myself over to these influences; and hope that I shall find the way if the position is in truth as they describe it, or I shall find that the position is not so."

When he arrives in Ain Harod, the first day gives him an extraordinary elation. They were welcomed with not too many speeches, but with a banquet, and then they danced the Horrah as they had never danced it before. "If it were possible to bring the masses of people to that enthusiasm, they could to anything."

Four years later he writes his diary in Hebrew—and literary Hebrew. He was an outstanding student of Jewish culture, and had in the interval been a teacher of the Aliyah, and then a worker in the Aliyah office. But he is back again in the collective group, and torn with doubts and inner struggle. One day he wants to get away to a larger environment, and plans how to be sent on a mission. Another day a fresh group of the Aliyah arrives, and he is cheered. When Hitler seizes Austria, he feels a fresh urge to go back to Europe, to redeem the world by the force of spirit. He is discontented with the communal tasks. But then, on the Passover Eve, he shares the joy of the festival after the hard toil. But then comes fresh trouble; from the Arabs.

He is engaged with all his comrades in keeping watch over their outpost at night; and brings vividly before us the vigil in the isolated hamlet. "Yesterday I went to sleep at midnight in my clothes. Half an hour later they woke us. We stand on guard, the rifle in our hand. The leader at Nahalal [a neighbouring village] had information that a band of three hundred was about to attack our post. The band did not come; but there is no doubt that it will come. To-night again we shall stand on guard; and what will be to-morrow? How shall we do our day's work?" A little later one of the old guard and teachers of the youth is killed, and he reflects: "The sword is suspended over all. The attack had not yet come, but it must come to-day, to-morrow. We Jews are the first for destruction." He feels as if he were at the bottom of the pit; and is worried that he has no self-confidence. If he is to lead in the cultural work, he must not take account of the common opinion, and so he must strengthen his own confidence; and so must get knowledge; and so must get away and

devote himself to study. A few nights later he was killed in an ambush.

A contrast with the sad, perplexed figure of the Marxist student, transformed to the conscious Jew, is the gay, comic figure of a street urchin of Prague who is transformed into the happy Jewish ploughman. He had been brought up by an uncle who was a juggler in a circus: and the wrestlers and clowns of the circus were his heroes. In Prague he had been a member of a street band who were anti-Jewish, but accepted him, had given him their uniform, and made him the drummer-boy. He tells the teacher at once: "The essential thing for me is to acquire a skilled trade. A skilled trade, my father used to say, is the sure basis of existence. I have no heart for studies." He knew little of Judaism, of Palestine, and of the ideal of the Return. The teacher asked him: "Do you know why you came to the Land of Israel?" "Of course. I shall wait here for the fall of the Nazis, and then I shall return to my country. In the meantime I'll learn a skilled trade." "And do you want to learn Hebrew?" "Willingly, but also English. My father said that I shall be able to learn English in Palestine; and that will be of great use to me." "Do you know about the Sabbath?" "Of course; it is the day when it is forbidden to smoke. But that is a superstition. I smoked on the Sabbath, and nothing happened to me."

He is interested in the Bible stories, particularly of the Judges, and he asks after each: "Was he truly a Jew?" He is most excited when they come to the exploits of Samson. "I thought that he was the King of Babylon. I only know one strong Jew, 'Breitbard' [a hero of the circus]." The troubles between Jews and Arabs perplex him. "I want to make peace with the Arabs, and then there will be no need to have foreign police." And he sets about organising a football match between the Jewish village and the neighbouring Arab village.

After two years he is accepted into the "grain" of his group, which is to start a new outpost of settlement. "I am happy. I shall be a builder." He had found his skilled trade, and would practise it in Palestine.

The transformation of life often brought with it a difficulty in the relation of the child in Palestine and the parent in Germany. There was a hard saying in those days of the break-up of families: "From parents pictures, from children letters." The boys and girls, eager to shed their German past, to become children of the Land of Israel, to speak and think in Hebrew, and to be part of the collective society, were conscious of estrangement from their old home. A letter, written by a boy after a year in Palestine to

his mother on her birthday, is revealing: "When I write, I do not know what you want to know. Things in my daily life have become so fixed in me that I cannot believe that they will interest anybody else: the physical work, the lessons, the settlement, the Land of Israel. If you asked me some things, I would tell you: Why do I like physical work? But when I want you to enter into my inner thoughts and share my feelings, I am confused by the distance which exists; and I do not know how to change this. I feel about you and Germany and all the things that were dear to me as if they were cut off. More and more the new grows strong, and the old remains only in the reading of German books; and it is overcast with a different light. Sometimes I feel that I am a new man with new clothes, and in a room with both new and old furniture, and I look on the old furniture with new eyes. Then I feel that we have lost common speech. I cannot tell you what I want to say. I am too tired, and I cannot find the right words."

On the other side many—indeed, most—of the young people were conscious of the difficulty of changing their speech and thought, of Hebraising. The lessons were the part of their education which had the smaller appeal. To throw themselves into hard bodily work: that had a touch of adventure and romance, and they went to it with energy. To drop the language of their home and talk to one another in Hebrew, to replace their German culture with the Hebrew literature of Palestine: that required a concentrated effort of mind which was more exacting than the effort of body. The struggle is described lightly, without the sentiment which sometimes obtrudes in the confessions, by a girl:

"To-day I am free to read. I go into the library of the Kevutza and search the bookshelves. I take out one book after another to see which I like. I discover Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamasoff* in German; I am just about to take it when a Hebrew book next to it catches my eye. For a moment I hesitate: Shall I take the Hebrew or the German book? But already I am leaving the library with the German book in my hand. At the door I stand still, I glance again at the bookshelves: and it seems as though the Hebrew book looked down on me with contempt. I go back to the room and something whispers into my ear: 'Do take the German book; think how nice it will be to lie on the bed and read without any effort!' At the same time I hear another voice: 'Leave the German alone—study, study! You cannot live in Eretz Israel if you do not understand and speak Hebrew.' I imagine I am standing at the entrance of a deep cave which is

barred by a huge stone. I know there are fabulous treasures inside, but only with great effort and hard work can the stone be removed and the treasures reached. . . . I have made up my mind and I take the Hebrew book. But I still stand before the book-case." A statistician recorded that about two-thirds of the books taken out of one Aliyah library in the first two years of training were German.

A few memories of first experiences in the land, contributed to the magazine, have a touch of humour: "We marched with enthusiasm at six in the morning to the field, on our first day of work. I was working with Dan and David. One of the older settlers explained what kind of work we had to do, gave us the tools, and said: 'Finish the job by eleven-thirty.' We asked him how we could find out when it was time to go home, as we had no watch. He replied: 'You can tell the time from the shadow. When the shadow grows short and straight, it is time to go home.' And with this he disappeared.

"We started work. We were to dig a ditch for pipes. When we began to feel tired, we sat down to rest, and from time to time we studied the length of the shadow. I was watching it, and took the utmost care. I noticed that the shadow was growing shorter and shorter. Then Dan thought it might be lunch-time. I had another look at the shadow, and it seemed that its length and direction confirmed his view. We decided that it was midday, collected our tools, and set out home. On the way David elaborated the theory that time in Eretz Israel passes extraordinarily quickly; Dan, on the other hand, held that time had passed so fast because we had been working so hard. By then we met a tractor; and the driver asked where we were going. We replied that our lessons started at two, and we had to be home in time. He seemed surprised, took out his watch, and we discovered that it was exactly 8.30 a.m. Shamefacedly we hurried back to our working places, begged the tractor driver not to give us away to any living soul; and among ourselves swore to treat the matter with eternal secrecy. We continued our work; and when my companions started again to presume that it was midday, I would not agree. At last we were saved by our instructor, who came to see what we had done. He explained that it was long past noon, and we must hurry home as fast as we could.

"Since that day I refuse to trust the shadow."

The sentimental note is more frequent, and is evoked particularly by the beauty of the scene. "When I set out for work at six, the fresh air around and the blue sky with the first rays of the rising sun above me, I feel so wonderfully happy—I could go on

for ever hoeing the soil round the fruit-trees. Everything is quiet; only a worker hums a sad little tune to himself, and then again all is quiet, and I can hear the leaves drop to the ground. . . . I am alone with myself and Nature. It is good to work like this. My arms and legs are tanned, my muscles are growing strong. I want to keep on working in the orchard. If I had a chance of getting thoroughly familiar with the work so that one day I might start a plantation in our own settlement, I would be happy.

"These are dreams of the future—a future which may come true, if all goes well. . . . Life would be beautiful and good; to be wholly at home in one's work, to live together with people one likes, and now and then to bend one's head back and gaze at the stars, at the eternal, and to bring everyday life in harmony with it. This is no wonderland, this can be real life. . . . What is best in our lot is: We are young, wide-awake and receptive. We can adapt ourselves to circumstances; though fate has denied us one way, we can still be happy."

"Yesterday, for the first time I was planting potatoes. The rain had stopped. From the loose earth a fresh scent rose into the air. It was good to work. Never before had I felt so close to Nature, to my work, to this corner of my country. The landscape overwhelmed me: the lovely hills covered with green, here and there black dots—Bedouin tents; before my eyes the lake of Kinneret [Galilee] with its silver waves: on the horizon snow-capped Hermon. Near by, behind a small wood, the Jordan. On the road Jews ride and walk, Jewish and Arabic children, a camel caravan passes by, shepherds lead the flocks to pasture, playing slow tunes on their flutes, while dogs bark and guard the sheep. All this goes to make a picture of peace. Suddenly military cars with machine-guns appear on the road. The picture is spoilt. Why is there no peace in the world? Why is there not everywhere a picture of peace? Why can't we all speak to each other, and make friends with everybody? Why?

"I awake from my dream. The tractor is waiting and calls to me: Plough!"

The romance of the East is a constant theme in letters.

". . . What a pity that my brother is still waiting for his certificate. I had been looking forward to his coming, and everything had been so beautiful in my dreams: I was waiting for him on the quay, and then I gripped his arm and off we went—to the Syrian border and to Mt. Hermon, where there is always snow. Down to

the Dead Sea, where it is as hot as in a baker's oven. And on to the wilderness, the green valley of Jesreel, the swamps of Huleh, to the Gilboa where Saul and David fought their battles. We bathed in the Mediterranean and it was difficult to cope with the currents of the Jordan! And then we squatted by the Dead Sea. The moon is shining, we are sitting on the water, we read the morning paper and eat poached eggs. Now and then we scoop a little salt out of the water and sprinkle it on our eggs. Land of marvels! Brother, I beg you, get your certificate, hurry, hurry, hurry!

"The Orient! Here the sun rises earlier, your shadow falls in a small circle round your feet, here the Arabs speak Arabic and the Jews Hebrew. Sometimes we see bombers, and the streets are full of camels. Where there's no railway, there's the bus; and where there is no bus, there are planes; and where there are no planes, caravans are dragging along. Far and wide, no tree, no bush; you can play hide-and-seek with yourself. And you halt on a sand-dune, shading your eyes with your hand, and at a sign forty Arab stallions dash forth with their riders to rob diamonds and opium. And the sun bleaches the white bones of the dead. You play Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, and say: They call me the Lord of the Desert. . . .

"The world lies before you! Take hold of it! Adventure is waiting! Let it take its course! This is not propaganda for the Orient: it is the simple truth.

"Your Son of the Desert."

The Bible land renews, unifies, Judaism in their young minds. Half-forgotten Jewish celebrations receive life and significance. One of the religious rituals of the Home bound up with the return to Nature is the celebration of Pentecost (the Feast of Weeks) as a harvest festival. It is the occasion of the gift of the first-fruits to the Jewish National Fund, which takes for this purpose the place of the Temple in the days of old. In every village the young people, riding in their wagons, collect offerings from each group; sheaves of barley, choicest vegetables, jars of honey, a calf bedecked with flowers, a mammoth loaf. The gifts are carried to the People's house, and are handed to the elders. And then the young persons play the harvest scene from the Book of Ruth, which is read as part of the traditional ritual. A boy of a religious group describes his thoughts when he celebrates this festival for the first time: "In Germany at the feast our homes were decorated with green leaves, and the synagogue was filled with the scent of birch. But the meaning of this green was not

clear to me. I knew that long ago Jews had lived in the land of Israel and celebrated the first-fruits, but the real meaning of the festival was hidden from me. Now I understand! The orange and grapefruit harvest is over, the tomatoes begin to ripen; the garden is full of vegetables; soon we shall go out into the vineyards; the wheat is brought in for threshing; the flowers are in full bloom—this is the time to celebrate the Festival of the First-fruits! Now, too, I understand the meaning of our prayer: 'We thank God for the good harvest.' At this time of the year everything around fills us with joy about the harvest. The settlements join hands in giving their first-fruits to the National Fund, united by ties of neighbourliness, common land, work and life."

Another Nature feast, which is a minor holiday in the traditional calendar, assumes likewise present significance in the land:

"We had been nearly six months in Eretz Israel when for the first time we set out to plant trees. 'To-day is the Birthday of the Trees,' the children sang, and with flowers in their hands went over to the children's quarters. We joined them, and for the first time we understood the meaning of this festival. The children, who were growing up in a country without woods, without trees, stood there holding the small plants in their hands. Everyone gathered in the square outside the children's quarters, and they began to plant. The grown-ups stood round them in a circle, and accompanied the work with songs. Later we walked to the place which had been assigned to the Youth Group, each of us carrying five young plants. Each plant was put carefully into the soil, and the roots covered with earth. That is the whole process of planting; yet just this simplicity touched us. One short moment is enough to plant a young tree and to create new life."

A festival of the Jewish calendar associated with history, and particularly favoured because of its heroic memories, is Hanukkah, the Feast of the Maccabees. A girl expresses its fresh appeal:

"One of the happy memories is my first Hanukkah in the Kibbutz. All the children lit candles in the candle-sticks which they had made. The multitude of small lights was reflected in the children's eyes, which shone like candles. At the sight a spark of joy was lit in my heart. Of a sudden I felt warm—warm and light. I glanced at the faces of those around me, and saw that I was not alone in the feeling. I saw in their smiling faces that the spark in my heart was a part of the flame that burnt in all. These sparks, which shine from the hearts of men to unite into a common flame, are holy. They light us on our way, and lead us to say 'Yes' to our new life in Eretz Israel. They weld us together into a community in which we feel closely united."

The renewal of Judaism for many begins through a fresh understanding of the seasons and the festivals. It may reach later to the essence of the faith.

The sense of growing into a community is the primary stage in the transformation. It offers a contrast with the aim of youth education in Nazi Germany, which was directed to complete subordination to the State and military discipline. The Jewish youth chose for themselves, and their discipline was self-imposed. Healing was brought about by the land and by the labour on the land. Nature was the kindly mother; and the young men and women absorbed new strength when they touched the soil. A Palestine teacher records the gradual change:

"Soon there awoke in them the desire to understand the land, the people, the Jewish world as a whole, and to feel themselves a part of it. They appeared like children who had been kidnapped in early childhood, and returned to their home after long years of captivity. Their parents had become estranged, their habits and reactions breathe the spirit of captivity. Thus the different groups which came into the country in the course of seven years mirrored the trials and the sufferings that befell European Jewry in those years. Even here, in Eretz Israel, they did not always find the external peace for which they yearned. Often clouds of smoke and burnt fields, uprooted trees and explosions received them. The more essential was our task to their mental balance and to restoring confidence and faith in men and in life.

"Human beings are like plants—given the right care, they grow and develop. Thus, the 'Jewish' soul of these boys and girls broke free in the end. How the miracle happened we cannot say. It may have been the Hebrew songs, the revelation of our history, the land itself, with its mountains and valleys, its plains and cities. Perhaps it was the closeness of our children to the soil; perhaps the festivals of harvest and vintage, of bringing in the fruit from the trees and of the shearing of the sheep. Perhaps also words of the Bible which become alive in each burning Hamsin.¹ Perhaps the pride they could feel in everyone whom they met here. Perhaps all these together brought about the change in their hearts."

One of the youth summarises the change of heart similarly at the end of his apprenticeship:

"We did not come as builders, but as refugees. We left the

¹ The hot wind and sandstorm that comes in the early summer and the autumn.

country of our birth because we were persecuted. When cruel fate left us no chance, we went to Palestine. What we sought was not the land of our fathers or our homeland, but a haven where we might rest. For a time we stood on the verge of a precipice; our links with the past were broken, and we had not yet found our way to the future. The word we knew best was 'No.' We jeered at faith and hope, we rejected everything. Long and difficult was our way till we learned to say 'Yes.' Slowly and imperceptibly we ceased to scoff. Life itself rather than explanations and arguments convinced us. Our eyes were opened to the bravery of everyday work. Life forced us to believe in the land, its revival, its builders."

Among these early groups of youth from Europe, the first six months in Palestine were tinged with a romantic colour, followed sometimes by disappointment. The next year was a period of hard work and gradual absorption into the novel life. The last six months of training under tutelage were a time of awakening and self-examination. They had then to make up their minds about a future when they would act for themselves. They had received a mental and physical preparation in the living and working community. Their romantic ardour gave place to a deeper understanding of the land and Judaism; their intellectual culture gave place to a love of work combined with a love of beauty. They realised the saying of the Psalmist about those who returned to Zion from the captivity of Babylon:

"We were as dreamers. Our mouths were filled with laughter, and our tongue with song. . . . They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves. . . ."

III. GROWTH

CHAPTER 8

THE YEAR OF CRISIS: 1938-1939

IF 1933 WAS THE YEAR of destiny for German Jewry, 1938-1939 was the year of crisis and terror for Jews and the world. The Nazi occupation of Austria, then of the Sudetenland, then of Czechoslovakia, brought immediate and utter ruin to communities with another half-million Jews; and the culminating outrages in November, 1938, struck every congregation, every institution, almost every family of Jews in the old Reich. It was clear to all that Jews could not live under the Nazi rule in Europe. No longer was it a question of adjustment of life, but a question of death or life; and the doom, which had already fallen on the million in the congregations of Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, threatened inexorably in 1939 the much larger Jewry of Poland with its three and a half millions. The one aim of all was to find a way of emigration before the prison-house was sealed. Palestine was the brightest hope, most of all for the young; and parents, who themselves turned in despair to Chili or Shanghai, were eager that their children should be able to turn to the Home in the Land of Israel. But it was soon clear that Palestine was likely to receive only a small part of the children who should be got out forthwith. In November, 1938, the Palestine Administration, indeed, granted a schedule for the Youth Aliyah of nearly 1,000 certificates. That was a much larger allocation than any given before; and it was granted at a time when the country was in a state of siege and part of Jerusalem itself was occupied for a few days by rebel bands. Yet when the 890 certificates had to be distributed between Berlin, Vienna, Prague, Bratislava and Warsaw, without taking account of the demand for a quota from the youth committees in the countries of refuge, the distribution was painfully thin.

The Movement, which had now its trusted friends in every community, contrived at once to expand its organisation. It appointed its office in London to be the distributing centre of certificates for the refugee countries, to organise its propaganda, and to extend its appeal for funds. It set up organs for sifting and preparing the children in all the Nazi-occupied lands, established centres of training in those lands, and also in Italy, to which the infection spread. It prepared temporary homes in Denmark, Sweden, Holland, France and Belgium for children who could be

got out of the Gehenna of Central Europe. But with all its efforts its directors recognised that they could only touch a part of the urgent need.

The Yishuv of Palestine offered in November, 1938, to receive 10,000 Jewish children from Germany; 5,000 they would take at once, and 5,000 a month or two later. The children would be placed in agricultural villages, training farms and private homes. That offer was followed after the pogrom by a proposal to receive 100,000 Jews from Germany, including the whole of the young generation. The Jewish Agency for Palestine submitted the plan to the Intergovernmental Committee, which was set up a few months previously by the Evian Conference to deal on constructive lines with the refugee problem in Europe. The representative bodies of American Jewry endorsed the proposal, and offered to raise 5,000,000 dollars to purchase land for the settlement. The British Government, however, which was preparing at that time the Round Table Conference of Arabs and Jews in London, with the hope of bringing the two peoples to an understanding about Palestine, was unwilling to prejudice the position by admitting a mass of immigrants, whether children or others, before the Conference was held. The Colonial Secretary stated in the House of Commons in December that they could not agree to the reception of the large number, though they did grant a substantial allocation of children's certificates. That opportunity of rescuing the whole was lost.

A bigger movement for the children, a movement for urgent rescue, was launched in the free democratic countries. If it could not fulfil the ideal aims, it could provide a reservoir from which the young people could later be drawn into the idealistic movement. The movement found the most generous response at once in the British people—not only British Jews, but also the Gentile population. Already in 1936 a small undenominational organisation had been formed for children's aid, which had brought to English homes a few hundred Jewish and "non-Aryan" children from Germany. Now it was expanded as a joint effort of Jews and Christians, under the Chairmanship of Lord Samuel and Lord Gorell, to bring thousands. In fact, between December, 1938, and the outbreak of war in September, 1939, it found a home in England for close on 10,000 children from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia. It is noteworthy that the total rescued in England in nine months was equal to the total rescued in Palestine in nine years. Four-fifths of the whole were Jewish boys and girls. They were of all ages, from seven to seventeen. The Government, responding to public opinion, facilitated their

admission to the country, and people in all parts of the land threw open their homes and their schools to the inflow. An appeal for funds was issued by Lord Baldwin, the former Prime Minister, to the people of Britain, and brought half a million pounds, of which the larger part was given to the Children's Aid. The generous asylum offered by the common man will never be forgotten by the Jews.

A similar movement was organised by the generous people of Holland, who gave a home to nearly 2,000. France and Belgium each took 800. Friends in the United States initiated a movement for a special child immigration, but were not able to bring it to fulfilment. In those feverish months, however, before the outbreak of war, nearly 15,000 children were able to find rescue, apart from those who migrated with their parents; and the total migration of Jews during that time was near 200,000. It was estimated that the children under sixteen in the Reich in January, 1939, numbered 60,000; and that half of them were saved before the outbreak of war.

The Youth Aliyah had no insignificant part in the children's exodus. The numbers who were brought to Palestine during the year, in spite of all the difficulties, rose to over 3,000. Those who were placed in the villages and the collective settlements and schools were equal to the total number brought in the previous five years. The Government granted 1,050 special certificates for the first six months of 1939, and another 1,000 for the second period; and the selection and transport were expedited. It was no longer possible to carry out the thorough sifting and selecting which had marked the efforts in the first years. And it was necessary in many places to double the groups. That involved the same kind of educational difficulties and compromises as were caused by the policy of evacuation of the school-children of London and the big cities to the country areas of England during the first months of the world war.

The progress is indicated in the total figures of the youth who were brought to the land year by year.

1934	..	..	..	..	..	365
1935	..	..	..	..	..	913
1936	..	..	..	..	..	1,163
1937	..	..	..	..	..	1,660
1938	..	..	..	..	..	3,097
1939	..	..	..	..	..	6,175

(the small increase reflects the temporary suspension of immigration on account of the revolt)

The last figure includes some hundreds of children who at the end of the year were on their way by devious odysseys to the Land. As we shall see, the certificates issued just before the outbreak of war did become effective.

The table of the funds raised by the Youth Aliyah shows a similar arithmetical progression. From a few thousand pounds in the first year, they advanced to a quarter of a million pounds in 1939; and the total that had been contributed by 1943 was over a million. One individual effort deserves mention. It was made by the film star, Eddic Cantor, who gave himself both in America and in England to the cause of saving the children. His personal appeal brought £100,000 in each country. By an amazing combination of artistry and simple humanity, he collected in England his £100,000 within two weeks. None could resist his appeal to save a child for £100, or to share with him the saving by a gift of £50.

The collection of the funds of the Aliyah is a shining example of the triumph of an idea once its virtue has been grasped. The few thousand pounds required in 1933 were conjured by tremendous efforts of the band of young enthusiasts. But as the Movement grew to require a quarter of a million pounds a year and more, the funds were raised without difficulty. The workers, mostly women, had a sense of mission. And the administration was expanded, particularly in England, which was the European clearing-house. In the early years the major part of the expenditure was for housing in the collective villages, and the English bodies that were concerned with the refugee problem as a whole and with the constructive development of Palestine contributed £100,000 for this capital charge. Then the Hadassah in America took on the whole responsibility for the United States; and the Women's Appeal Committee in England and the Women's International Zionist Organisation in the British Dominions—and till the war overwhelmed them, in the communities on the Continent—supplemented the efforts of the committees of the Youth Aliyah. In the work no distinction existed between Zionist and non-Zionist, Orthodox, Liberal and religiously indifferent, Jew and Gentile. One touch of humanity made the free world kin. No other Palestinian purpose had the same sovereign charm; and it was not the least service of the Aliyah to break down the sectional barriers. In Britain and the Scandinavian countries, particularly, Christian friends were eager to help. The Danish Christian women beset the Minister of Justice, who, for a time, resisted the appeals to admit the youth from Germany. They filled his chamber in the weekly hour when the

Minister receives petitioners; they plied him with telegrams; they conducted a campaign through the Press, and in the end the Minister gave way.

Of the terror through which hundreds and, indeed, thousands of the future wards of Youth Aliyah passed in those dreadful days, one story may serve as an example. It was recorded in Palestine a year later by a Jewish boy of sixteen years from the town of Emden, which had a small Jewish community. The memory of the night of November 9th, 1938, was burnt into the young minds and scared their souls:

"Dead silence—not a sound to be heard in the town. The lamps in the street, the lights in the shops and in the houses are out. It is 3.30 a.m. Of a sudden noises in the street break into my sleep, a wild medley of shouts and shrieks. I listen, frightened and alarmed, until I distinguish words: 'Get out, Jews! Death to the Jews!' I jump out of bed and call my parents, who do not seem to have heard anything. I stop and listen. 'They' are at our neighbour's house. Suddenly I hear shots. . . . Then again: 'Death to the Jews!' What shall I do? In a second they will be here. Is there still a hope of escape? Perhaps I should try to crawl over the roof into the house of our Christian neighbours? They would not give me away. Or perhaps? . . .

"Fists are hammering at the door. The shutters are broken open. We can hear the heavy cupboards crashing to the floor; the whole house trembles and shudders. Two Storm Troopers rush upstairs, shouting at the top of their voices: 'Out with the Jews!' I run out of my room, and down the stairs. There I meet my parents, and silently we exchange a look. They shot at us from the street. We were forced to descend the steps during the shooting, my eyes looked straight into the guns. Fear left me. I knew there was no escape from the bullets. 'I am hit,' stammers my father, before he breaks down on the stairs. I am forced to go on, but I can see blood on the stairs and a dark stain on my father's back. My mother takes him back to the bedroom. I have reached the street, and one of the Storm Troopers holds me by the neck. The others rush upstairs and compel my mother, despite her pleading, to leave my father and come with them.

"We are led through the dark streets of Emden. Where are we going? We do not know. We pass the savages at work in all the Jewish houses. The sky reflects a red glare: our synagogue has been set on fire. We reach a big square lit up by searchlights and hemmed in by Storm Troopers. We were the first to arrive, but the square is gradually crowded. All our friends and relatives

join us. Some are clad only in a coat, others are barefoot. A young woman whispers into my ear: Had I seen her husband who was separated on the way? I know the answer, but I did not reply. I had seen the Storm Troopers knock him down and torture him to death.

"Then I saw Troopers dragging my father to the square. Now and then he broke down, and every time they beat him until he got up and stumbled on. When he reached the centre of the square, he fell and remained lying on the ground, and they threw a sack over him. We were forced to follow the Troopers. One ordered us to form a circle round him, and shouted: 'Lie down! Get up!' And we had to obey.

"At seven the sun rose. Police appeared in the streets. There was great excitement among the population who went to their work. In front of every Jewish house that had been wrecked crowds were gathering. The police came to our square and called for the Jewish doctor to examine the wounded and bandage them. My father was wounded in the lungs, and the ambulance came to take him to hospital. The police behaved decently and assisted the Jewish doctor in his task. A little later men over sixty-five, women and children, were released. I was not among them, but when I said good-bye to my mother, she said: 'I am sure you will be home before night.' Then she left the square, alone.

"For us who remained a terrible day began, and it was followed by a more dreadful night. A group of men and boys, and I among them, were taken in to a big hall which was normally a gymnasium. During the night we had to lie on the floor and close our eyes. In the darkness Storm troopers sat round a big table. That was the 'Tribunal.' When one of us was called, he had to get up, walk over to the table, and answer every question. The 'Accused' was almost blinded by a powerful searchlight. One of my friends was called and accused of 'Rassenschande.' Judgment was passed: Death.

"Although we had been ordered to keep our eyes closed, I opened them from time to time to see what was happening. But I did not realise that one of the Guards stood by my side. He shouted: 'Get up!' I went to the table, and the searchlight was directed on my face. It blinded me. My name was written down; then I was asked: 'Are you a student of the Talmud?' 'No.' 'Do you know the Talmud?' 'I know that there is a book called the Talmud. Its contents are not known to me.' 'Is it true that a sack of stones is put into the graves of your dead so that they may stone Jesus in the other world?' After that, I with others was taken

into the yard. Again we were made to run in a circle, again they shouted: 'Get up, Lie down.'

"At seven next morning that was over. One of the Guards ordered us to lie down. He explained that soon some 'Gentlemen' would be arriving, and to their question how we had slept, we should answer: 'Very well.' Gestapo officers arrived. They asked us, and we replied as we had been instructed. Then we were marched to the railway station. During that time I had never lost my self-control, but when we passed the hospital where my father was dying, I could hardly keep going.

"It was Friday morning. All of us had had our last meal on Wednesday evening. We were taken by train to Oldenburg, and led through the streets of the town. The Hitler Youth were lined up and abused us as we marched. At midday we continued the journey to our unknown destination. Where will they take us? Everyone brooded over this question. All we knew was that we were going towards an ill fate.

"At eight in the evening, the train stopped. We could not see where we were. The Guards opened the doors, and ordered us to get out. As soon as some had left the train, we heard screams. Storm Troopers set upon all those who had got out, striking them with the butt-ends of their rifles. I hid in a corner of my compartment and waited. Outside hundreds of Storm Troopers had suddenly appeared out of the darkness. All the carriages were emptied. We were about two thousand Jews from our town, Bremen and Hamburg. A mad hunt began. We were driven to a forest-path, and forced to run as fast as we could. Those who stopped were beaten. We ran and ran, without seeing anything; we stumbled over roots, against the trees—we knew we ran for our lives. If one could not drag himself any further, if the beating was of no avail, he was thrown on a van.

"Suddenly, lights and searchlights in front of us. Crowds of Storm Troopers came towards us. We were driven through big gates, and found ourselves in a huge open space surrounded by high walls. Barbed wire on top of the walls, watch-towers in the four corners, Storm Troopers with machine-guns. We knew where they had taken us: to the concentration camp."

The magic of Palestine was to prove potent to heal these wounds of memory. But it is not surprising that the youth who had suffered should appear at times to be extravagant in their national ardour.

One of the gruesome stories of the year of terror was the herding of 14,000 Jews from Germany, who had Polish passports, in the

no-man's-land between Germany and Poland. The Nazis declared they were Polish subjects; and when the relations between the Reich and Poland became strained, they suddenly expelled them. The Poles refused to recognise them as their subjects, and refused admission across the Polish frontier. For a few days they were driven across and across, and then they found a precarious shelter in the village of Zbonszen, in no-man's-land. Men, women and children had been thrown out of their homes without any time for preparation. They had neither food nor baggage. But amongst them were a few boys and girls chosen for the Youth Aliyah, who had a courage and a hope. With them, too, was a leader of the Aliyah, an enthusiastic member of the Zionist youth, who had been appointed at Mannheim (in the Rhineland) to direct the school for the selected candidates. He had been thrown into prison with the children, put into a train and taken to the Polish frontier. He gathered the children together in a stable, and there he went on teaching them Hebrew, and making them look after the helpless and hopeless. They would start their songs, dance their Horrah, and gather the elder people round them.

The Jewish American Joint Distribution Committee, the Red Cross, the Quakers and others came to the help of the marooned mass; and after a time it was possible to obtain the release from internment of some of the young people and to send them to an agricultural training farm at Grochau, near Warsaw. Forty boys and girls were rescued, and in March, 1939, they started their preparation and their waiting for the Palestine certificates. Grochau was a farm of the Haluz; but the older Haluzim welcomed the younger apprentices and taught them to work in the fields, as a co-operative group. They were turned to a community and became strong again. At last some certificates came for Palestine, and those in the group who seemed most worthy were chosen. They awaited their departure. Then in September, 1939, the Nazis invaded Poland. The group forthwith set out, taking the younger children in their wagon to the frontier. Of their march and their meeting with older refugees from Warsaw we have told in the prelude.

Each country overrun by the Nazis had its drama of rescue. The *Book of the Youth* includes a story of the way in which children from Vienna were got out of the Nazi clutches after the occupation of March, 1938. Those gathered by the Youth Aliyah were cut off for weeks from their directors and leaders. They were in bewilderment and confusion. When the first horror had passed, the one thought was to get them—or rather the few for whom

certificates were available—out of the land. There was no time for sifting and training. They must go as they were to Palestine or to England or Holland. During those weeks of terror the boys and girls organised themselves as a co-operative, brought food for the group, and established their Committee of Ways and Means. Most of them had a Jewish background. And though they had not the advantage of the German bands, to find settled groups of their own comrades, those that were rescued took root in Palestine. But many enrolled in Vienna were trapped and doomed. The Austrian community organised schools for the training of the young people in Vienna, and training farms in sixteen villages in the country. In the year and a half which were given between the Nazi occupation of Austria and the World War, some thousands were trained and over 1,200 were able to get to Palestine. Another 600 were placed in England and Holland, to prepare there for the Home.

The writer of these lines recollects a visit which he paid, two weeks before the outbreak of the war, to the meagre farm homes which were left to Austrian Jewry. Even those homes had been confiscated by the Nazis, and were hired by the Jewish community at an exorbitant rental to serve for training-places. They were full of Haluzim and younger persons of the Aliyah waiting, waiting for their chance of a certificate to Palestine. The boys hummed to the tune of "Tipperary," in their broken English, "It's a long long way to a permit." Already the shadow of war was over the land. Not one of them could be rescued. At one centre 200 young people were gathered. Fifty of them were adult Haluzim, and 150 were members of Youth Aliyah, receiving what was called the middle Hachsharah. A comrade from Palestine directed the work; and an old soldier, not a Jew, was there on behalf of the Government to watch them, but had been made sympathetic by their enthusiasm. Every day they were harried with the demand for returns. They must account for every potato. Outside their village hung the slogans: 'Jews are not wanted,' 'Jews are our curse.' But in their little community they were happy and hopeful.

There was the same fight against time in Czechoslovakia. When the Nazi troops threatened to march into the country in September, 1938, thirty children chosen for the Aliyah were ready to set out from Prague to Marseilles. They were the holders of certificates for the children's village, Ben Shemen. To make sure of their departure they were to fly. That very day general mobilisation of the Czech Army was ordered, and all communication with outer countries was cut off. For two weeks

it was not known whether the children had escaped, and then came word that they had arrived in Palestine.

So it was again a few months later in Brünn, the capital of Slovakia. The local committee had received 250 certificates for the period of the winter, and established a camp. Forty had set out in February; 200 were to leave in March. The Nazi horde marched, and this time occupied Prague. On March 14th, the camp was broken up; and the children went to bid farewell to their families in different parts of the country. On the same day the German troops entered Prague. The trap had closed. But the Youth Aliyah committee gathered them again, and brought them to a quiet spot in the outskirts of the capital. Slovakia became at once a puppet anti-Semitic state, and it was necessary to get a permit for each child from the Gestapo before it could leave the country. The permits were obtained, and in April the group left Prague.

It had become clear after the crisis in 1938, that all the boys and girls enrolled by the Aliyah would not be admitted to Palestine when their preliminary training of one or two months was finished. At the same time it was clearly perilous to leave them in the countries under Nazi rule. So the work of preparation on the land had to be extended to the countries of refuge; and some thousands of children must be harboured for an indefinite time, which might be months or might be years, in England, Holland, Scandinavia. The programme of the Aliyah was brought into closer line with that of the Halutz, which had organised in Europe centres of agricultural preparation, extending over two years. For the adolescents that meant the finding of teachers and of homes where the children could undergo their double transformation, for the physical work on the land and for the cultural life of Palestine. The educational system which had been worked out in the National Home must be imitated, with necessary modification, in the other lands.

One of the training centres for the Aliyah which was opened in Britain had a peculiarly romantic association. It was Whittingehame, the family mansion of the first Lord Balfour, set in the hills of Lammermoor, twenty miles from Edinburgh. The nephew and heir of the author of the Balfour Declaration immediately offered his home for the refugee children from Germany and Central Europe when the stream began to arrive. They should fit themselves there for the life in the Home which his uncle, on behalf of the British Government, had promised to help the Jews to attain. The mansion was as full of associations as a village of Palestine, and it was set in a beautiful estate of woodland and tilth. In that

Scotch acre 200 boys and girls completed their training. A fortunate fraction were able to get their certificates for Palestine before the outbreak of war, or before the Mediterranean was closed. During the anxious months of 1940, when Britain awaited invasion, and all male enemy aliens from the age of sixteen were moved from the "protected areas" to camps, forty of the boys suffered internment in a barricaded racecourse. They were the bright element in a crowd of dejected men. Several of their teachers—refugees likewise—were with them, and in the narrow confines of the camp they got permission to work. They kept up their practical training, gardening, carpentry and cobbling, and also their learning of Hebrew and Palestine lore. They worked harder in the camp than at Whittingehame itself, because they felt their special responsibility. After a few months, through the persistent efforts of the Scottish Refugee Committee, they were released and able to return to Whittingehame. The teachers, however, were left behind; and it is characteristic that the boys addressed a letter to the Home Secretary, saying that their first reaction to the news was to refuse to go without their leaders; but they responded to the discipline of the movement.

The Balfour home was given up in 1942 for lack of newcomers to be trained; and a smaller farm-school was found near Edinburgh. The large majority of the boys and girls, when they finished their two years' training, took their part in the British war effort, either in the Military Pioneer Corps or as agricultural workers on farms.

During that year of warm helpfulness, 1939, other groups—together numbering 500 young persons—were placed in country mansions in England, Wales and Ireland. The elder boys of these groups also suffered their period of internment. All have now finished their youth training, and passed into the groups of Haluzim, of whom over 1,000 are taking part in food production under the County War Agricultural Committees. When the war broke out, it was necessary immediately to move some hundreds, because they were living in coastal areas which were closed to alien enemies. A temporary home of refuge was offered in a Welsh castle, Gwrych, which had been derelict for twenty years. That castle sheltered, among others, one of the religious groups, and within its precincts a Talmudic school was conducted.

During the war the hundreds of Aliyah wards in Great Britain, whose journey to their Palestine goal had to be deferred, formed little Jerusalems, so to say, in Britain's green and pleasant land. They graduated as adult "pioneers," and while the Haluz movement in Europe was crushed in the general destruction,

they not only maintained their groups, but spread their ideal and their example of productive Socialist life to the young people in the country of their sojourn, and gathered bands of recruits for Palestine. They became members of the English Agricultural Labourers' Trade Union, but they were at pains to preserve their mental and practical attachment to the agricultural life of Palestine. So they published for their members a journal with the Hebrew title *Zenaim* ("seeds"), which contained English articles on aspects of farming both in England and in Palestine. And the leaders of all sections were able to attend special courses of scientific agriculture including lectures on Palestine cultivation.

Though they must wait in England, they felt that they belonged to a society and were not just refugees. The ready help of Sir John Russell, Director of the Agricultural Research Department of the Government, and of members of the staff of Birkbeck College in the University of London, who took trouble to master the Palestine particularities of their subjects, made possible that extraordinary extension of adult education for aliens during the crisis of the war. The English College and the English Agricultural Institute took for the Jewish apprentices the place of the University of Jerusalem and of the Agricultural Station of the Jewish Agency at Rehovot in Palestine. Another enterprise of adult education for the waiting Haluzim in England was established by a religious group, the Bachad, in Manchester. It is an Institute of Jewish learning, to which the agricultural workers in the groups dotted over the country are drafted for a few weeks of concentrated study.

After England, it was Holland, the *palladium libertatis* of Europe, and the haven of Jewish exiles from Spain and Portugal in another era of struggle for civilisation, that opened its doors most generously to the youth. In the early days of the Nazi persecution the Government of the Netherlands set the example of practical aid, by granting to the Jewish refugees' committee an area of land in the newly reclaimed "polders" of the Zuiderzee. The village of Werkdorp (Workville), well-named for the ideal of the Aliyah, was, from 1934 until its destruction in 1940, a living centre of Jewish youth, some Haluzim, some Youth Aliyah. A young Palestinian directed their preparation, and brought the breath of Palestine to inspire. Over a hundred boys and girls were able in time to leave for their goal, largely through the efforts of a woman, German born but Dutch by marriage, Vrou van Tyn, who was the head of the Aliyah Committee in Holland and who lavished on them affectionate care. She refused in May, 1940, to

leave her post and seek safety, but stood up to the Nazi minions in order to carry on the rescue to the last.

Another small home in a neighbouring small land, the Duchy of Luxembourg, had an historic association. The hostel of the youth in the village of Altwies, on the French border, had been the hotel in which Victor Hugo passed his exile when he was storming against the tyranny in his native France. There for five years groups of refugees had instruction in horticulture and Hebrew.

Denmark was another little land which, in the thick gloom of Nazi-dominated Europe, gave a gleam of light. Like the Dutch, the Danes from the first days of the Nazi régime opened their country generously to a stream of young Jews; and their co-operative farmers provided places of training each year for some hundreds of Haluzim. In that country and in the neighbouring Sweden the Christians were joint partners with the small Jewish community in making homes for children when the war broke out. Some 500 were spirited over the frontiers in the last days of August, 1939, and were placed in what seemed safety with kindly neighbours. Swedish friends of the Aliyah, of whom the guiding spirit was Miss Eva Warburg, organised agricultural and technical training centres. Some of the young people lived in Swedish homes, others in hostels of the Movement. Copenhagen and Stockholm were rallying points of the Aliyah in the first period of the war; but after Copenhagen was occupied by the Nazis, Stockholm alone had to serve that purpose. Nowhere, however, have Jewish girls and boys in Germany enjoyed during the grim trials of the war a truer preparation for the collective life of the Kibbutz of Palestine than in the farmsteads of their Danish hosts. A fraction got to Palestine; but nearly 200 boys and girls remained in the land through the throes of the war, sheltered by a people who found in their young charges an outlet for their human feeling. When in 1943, the Nazis sought to deport them to death, they escaped to Sweden.

The United States with the biggest Jewish community, which was deeply stirred by the agony of the children, was unable to be a temporary haven, except for a very few of those waiting to go to Palestine. An attempt to pass through Congress a Bill permitting a quota of 20,000 child immigrants from Europe had to be abandoned. But the Jewish bodies, with the aid of a few Christian fellow citizens—at the head of them the first lady of the land—took the premier place in the provision of funds for settlement in Palestine.

So during that year of crisis and terror, and the years of catastrophe that followed, the Youth Aliyah grew in stature, and

showed remarkable power of expansion and adaptation to circumstance. It was not only a lifeline for the young victims of Nazi barbarity, but also the symbol and the instrument of the re-birth of the young generation.

CHAPTER 9

YOUTH ALIYAH IN THE WAR

THE THIRD CONFERENCE of the Youth Aliyah world organisation was to be held in Amsterdam at the end of August, 1939, immediately following the Zionist Congress, which was meeting at Geneva. Great was the progress to be reported; and large plans were to be presented. But it was not held, for in the midst of the Congress fell the bombshell of the Nazi-Soviet Pact. The war which had hung over Europe for a year could no longer be averted. It must be a matter of days or weeks before half the Continent would be a battleground. The leaders of the Jewish communities of Germany, Austria, Poland and dismembered Czechoslovakia rushed back to their countries, to organise, if at all possible, the last efforts of rescue before the barriers were closed. The leaders of the communities in the democratic countries, England, France, Holland, Belgium, Scandinavia, rushed back to their countries, to organise if possible the reception and salvage of a few hundred more from the prison house. The Palestinian leaders rushed back to Palestine to prepare the Yishuv to take its part in the struggle, and to do what they could to keep the doors of the National Home open for life-saving. A thousand precious certificates for children of the Youth Aliyah, and 500 for children to be maintained by relations in Palestine, had been granted by the British Government and distributed; but most of the chosen holders had not been able to leave for Palestine. Many of them were in the countries immediately threatened. A supreme effort must be made to save them; and if that could not be done, to make the certificates available for others who could be brought out. That was the immediate call to the Youth Aliyah which must compel attention. The era of international conferences of all kinds had come to an end for a long time.

The story of the Aliyah, in the four years of war which have passed since that last meeting, is at once of a thrilling romance and of a grim tragedy. It is a tribute to the devotion and resourcefulness of all its workers that the inflow to Palestine has

been maintained at the average rate of over 1,000 a year, the same as that in the years of—so-called—peace. When the continents and the seas were barred to almost all but the armed forces and persons going to and fro on Government missions, it has yet been possible to transport 5,000 children from the countries dominated by the enemy to the haven of Palestine. When hundreds of thousands of Jews have been done to death in prison camps and in ghettos of extermination, it has been a precious gleam of light to have conducted to their home of promise bands of children across the oceans, circumnavigating Europe and Africa; or across the plains of Russia and across the Black Sea and the plateaus of Persia and Turkey. The war has given no comparable rescue romance. It would be ungrateful not to record a word of recognition of the willingness of the British Government to make available certificates for the children in enemy lands or enemy-controlled lands, so that hope should not be altogether crushed. Tragedies there have been for children chosen for the Aliyah as well as for the mass of the Jewish population. Some have been trapped in the occupied countries of Western Europe just when rescue was promised. The hope of bringing 1,000 children from France, and 500 from the Low Countries in 1941, was frustrated by the Nazi occupation of all France when the arrangements were complete. Nevertheless, the record of saving is the brightest spot in the darkest days which Jewry, and indeed humanity, has known.

Before war was declared, in those ten days of desperate interlude which were given between the sealing of the Russo-German Pact and the invasion of Poland, there was feverish activity in Europe to bring to safety some hundreds of children. The aim was to transport them to neighbouring Denmark; Sweden, Holland and England, and to speed a few more that were waiting at Trieste to Palestine direct. Some of the stories are told in a diary kept by the Aliyah Office in London. The workers would not admit to each other how certain was the doom, but must go on with their work, as if time was still given. The Berlin Office organised some extraordinary transports of children to England. A few hundreds had ready and complete their permits with their group visa; they must be brought across Holland and so to England. The kindly Dutch Government, moved by humanity, allowed the transport of the children without questioning. The kindly Danish Government, too, was prepared to receive 300 children, if a guarantee were given that they would emigrate to Palestine. Sweden would grant shelter to a smaller number, if the Aliyah would give a financial guarantee

for their maintenance. The American Aliyah Committee gave the guarantee. The English Committee got assurance that the children would be admitted.

On September 1st, as Hitler's armies broke into Poland, a group of sixty children from Germany arrived at Harwich. They had left Berlin on the last train for civilians which was allowed to pass to Cologne and the Dutch border. They were shepherded by a Christian Dutch woman who had convoyed time and again the children of the Youth Aliyah across the German-Dutch border—and who was to continue her devotion till Holland, too, was overrun—and brought to England. At the Dutch frontier a bus met them. They were packed into it and dashed to the Hook of Holland, where the boat for England was waiting. The boat delayed its departure for some hours till they arrived. The passport and Customs officials at Harwich made no difficulty, and the children were distributed to the English homes.

In that same week forty-seven children, who had embarked at Trieste on an Italian ship for Haifa, were stayed in their course at Rhodes. The report went that they were to be brought back to Germany. Italy, it was believed, would enter the war straightway, and she recalled her ships. That doom was postponed; the ship set out eastwards again from Rhodes, and the children came to Haifa. Providentially, Italy did not come into the war for another nine months; the Mediterranean was still open to her ships, and transports of children during those months could be brought to Marseilles and to Genoa and to Trieste, and get to Palestine without an odyssey round half the world. The Italian ship with the last transport was seized in June, 1940, by a British warship and brought to Malta, but the children were rescued from there. So bit by bit those for whom certificates were granted before September, 1939, were brought to Palestine.

Some of the thousand had more exciting and more protracted adventures. We have described in the prelude the first adventures of the group who were doing agricultural training outside Warsaw, and had a grim journey through the blasted countryside of Poland, chased by Nazi planes, till they reached the precarious refuge of Vilna and were brought to the haven of Stockholm. The Baltic and the North Sea were closed, but some of the children were carried by plane to Amsterdam, and thence went on through Holland to Marseilles, and in the spring of 1940 reached their home in Galilee, the village of Ayeleth Hashahar (the coming up of the dawn).

Part of the group were left in Lithuania; and the sequel of their Aliyah must be told. There they worked in isolated farms, but

keeping together somehow as a group. It was almost a summer idyll, till one day a neighbour's wagon stopped beside them in the fields, and a peasant shouted out in Russian, which some of the boys understood: "The Russians are here." The Soviet Army had occupied Lithuania. Once more the preparations and the hopes for the Aliyah to Palestine were dashed. Lithuania was sovietised. They went on with their work on the farms, and still made efforts to arrange for departure. Then came autumn; rains and mud everywhere. The Lithuanian farmer, faced himself with ruin, required back-breaking labour for the most meagre wage. Hadassah in America heard of them and sent funds; and they were able to pass the winter lodged and scattered in little towns. It is the spring of 1941, the third since the group were tossed as stateless jetsam to the no-man's-land. A miracle happened. For the first time in its history the Soviet authorities granted permission to Jews in its territory to leave for Palestine. The group assembled once more. The prospect was months of hard labour on railroad jobs. But the leader of the Aliyah appeared at their hostels, and gave the word: "Pack your things. To-morrow you start for the land of Israel." And she waved papers and tickets before them. They packed their bundles and sat silent, almost dazed. None went to bed, but the next morning they started. The train was to carry them through Russia from north to south, to the Black Sea; thence by boat to Turkey. And from Turkey they would make their way overland to Syria and Palestine. A few remained, and they sped the others, "till we meet again in Turkey." The leader with the last remnant was that young German Jew who had been the group instructor at Mannheim, had shepherded his charges to the no-man's-land, brought them from there to the training farm at Warsaw, and had led them from Warsaw to Vilna. His turn, too, arrived, and all the group had come to their bourne.

A record less dramatic, but of equal resourcefulness, is that of the 300 children who were admitted to Denmark in these fateful weeks. The League of Danish Women, Gentile and gentle friends, placed them with individual farmers up and down the country. They found for them bicycles, so that, scattered as they were, they might meet together on their half-holidays and continue their "Sihot" and their Hebrew culture, and end with a dance. In the tranquil atmosphere of Denmark, as it was till the spring of 1940, the neatness and beauty of the land, the peaceful life of the home, the spirit of co-operation which is distinctive of the farming, and the humanity of the farmers were "balm in Gilead" to the waiting children. All was prepared for their journey to

Palestine; and in April the Danish Government agreed to receive in their place a hundred more children from Germany. The very next day the Nazis occupied the land. The effort was made to rescue the children there, and bring them to Marseilles, but before that was achieved, France had collapsed, Italy had entered the war. The road was closed. The British Government, however, was moved to allow the children to come to Palestine if they could be brought across countries which were not occupied by the Nazi enemy. One way was left, to take them from Denmark to Sweden and Finland, thence to Russia (not yet in the war), and from there repeat the odyssey of those who had been rescued from Lithuania. Visas and tickets were obtained. On December 5th, 1940, the first party of eighty left, and it reached Palestine on the first night of the Maccabean Feast (Chanukkah). The rest of the party was left in Denmark. Those who had come home brought with them a vivid sense of the love of their neighbour, for they had been sojourners in a friendly land. They cherished an affection for Denmark, but the love for Palestine was greater. In Denmark they were working in a built-up country; in the National Home they would work in a country to be built up.

A teacher who accompanied the group through Europe recorded impressions of their passage. In the towns of Sweden and Finland the Jewish community turned out to welcome them and speed them on the way with gifts. At the Russian frontier Jews amongst the Customs officers talked with them in Yiddish, and even in Hebrew. At Leningrad they were shown over the city. But in their long journey through Russia, though they saw Jewish settlements in the Ukraine, the Jews there knew nothing of Youth Aliyah; and at Odessa, when they embarked for their voyage across the Black Sea, they were subjected to stringent searching. They had anxious hours when the boat put in at Varna in Bulgaria, occupied by the Nazis; but no incident occurred, and at Stambul again they lighted on friends.

A few boys in Poland made their way in the midst of the chaos to Rumania, before that country was involved in war. "We walked for three days and nights without sleep. Nearly every town we passed was in flames; the railway stations were shambles. On the third night we reached X, where a comrade took us to his home and gave us food. From there we got over the border, and came direct to the Aliyah Office in Czernowitz. When I saw your letter saying that my certificate was in London, I forgot the experiences of the last days. How soon can I get to Palestine?" It is recorded that, in the still grimmer years that followed, Polish Jewish youths smuggled themselves out of the Nazi hell by

travelling under the railway coach, holding on desperately to the space between the wheels.

In 1941 news came from Germany of groups from the Aliyah who were waiting in the training centres. Till the Low Countries were overrun, a fortunate few who had certificates were able to get away, and reach Palestine through Amsterdam. The rest carried on with their training. Twelve Kibbutzim with 600 young persons continued their work; and the Aliyah hostels in Berlin, Hamburg and the other few towns, where Jewish life could still be organised, were centres of physical training, cultural activity—and hope; tiny oases of fellowship in a bleak desert of hatred. But these groups with those in Holland and Belgium were destroyed in the next year.

In the third year of the war, when some certificates were made available for children in the Nazi-occupied countries, a pathetic reply was received from the community of Vienna: "We cannot use the certificates because we have no children." Few were the brands which could be plucked from the burning. But every now and then a little party of a score or less would somehow arrive in Turkey, having been shepherded in their wanderings to the neutral land; and then they would be brought to "Moledet," the endearing name of the Homeland, which means, literally, the land of birth. It was a constant care of the Aliyah to secure a record of the individual experiences of the rescued child, so that it might be added to the material of the history of our time. And in this way these stories of Pilgrim's Progress have been preserved.

The Government of Palestine left the door half-open in 1940. It granted during that period 1,600 certificates for the children; 1,200 for the Aliyah itself, and 360 for children who had relations or friends in Palestine that would maintain them. The National Council, the Vaad Leumi, organised that supplement of rescue; and the Youth Aliyah took responsibility to the Government for bringing the children. No longer was it a question of saving children direct from Germany, Austria or Czechoslovakia. The Government agreed that Jewish children could be brought from any countries where they were to be found, and where they could obtain transport to the land. So the certificates were distributed to refugees in Denmark, Sweden and Lithuania, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Bulgaria, and a few in Rumania, Cyprus and Greece. Recha Freier, the woman who conceived Youth Aliyah, went to the Balkan countries and organised the work of rescue with the same fierce intensity as she had kindled in 1932. Six places were given for boys in Australia who had been wards of the Aliyah in England, and in the anxious summer months of

1940, when Britain expected invasion, had been transported to the Dominion and interned. When there was place on a ship bound for the Middle East, they were put on it.

For those who came from Europe the routes were varied. Of 150 boys and girls in Yugoslavia, most were fugitives from Vienna, who had lived destitute for eighteen months in a ramshackle boat in no-man's-water on the Danube. They tried to reach Palestine somehow, without certificates, but they were stayed and interned, and then supported by the local Jewish community. Youth Aliyah rescued them, and brought them to Palestine by way of Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey. They were more fortunate than children of parents fleeing from Central Europe and the Balkan States who reached Palestine without certificates, and were to be deported with 1,500 adults to a distant British island colony. These were placed in Haifa Harbour on the French ship, ironically named *Patria*. Before they set out, the ship was sunk by an explosion. Two hundred on it were drowned, including five of the children; 115 youths who were saved received a grace from the Palestine Government, and became wards of Youth Aliyah.

It was otherwise with another group of adults and children fleeing for their lives who arrived without certificates. This time the Administration was inexorable. They must be taken to the Colony of Mauritius, and interned there till the end of the war. Miss Szold might not visit them, but she wrote them a letter and sent them gifts: "If only we could change the decree, we would receive you with open arms. We can only send our blessing and greetings. Yet we look forward to the day when you will be able to come to the Land and work it. Meantime, be strong and of good courage. We shall hope to send you books for study. Prepare yourselves for the goal which is coming to us all."

The grimdest tragedy of the "coffin ships" was played to its close in the *Struma*, which, with its burden of 750 fugitive men, women and children who had set out from Rumania, sank in March, 1941, in the Black Sea. When the ship was held at Constantinople, the Aliyah had finally obtained from the Palestine Government a permit for the admission of the fifty children who were on it, but the word of this concession came too late. The boat had already been dispatched from Stambul, and was lost before the message could reach it. Following this disaster, which roused public opinion, the Government relented from its severity so far as to allow a few boatloads who arrived without certificates to be interned in Palestine camps. Eight hundred passengers on a ship, the *Darien*, who had voyaged for five

months, were so interned. Among them were sixty children and youth, not counting nineteen babies born on the ship or later in the internment camp. After months of effort, Miss Szold obtained the consent of the High Commissioner that the children should be adopted by the Aliyah and freed. During their interment she appointed an instructor to teach them, so that they learnt Hebrew and became a disciplined body. On the day before the eve of the Passover, the assent of the Government was communicated. She straightway saw the High Commissioner, and asked him to release the children quickly enough to bring them to their new homes for the Passover, provided that their parents—almost all these came with parents—assented. The High Commissioner granted the request, and Mr. Beyth, her faithful adjutant, travelled to the camp and brought the children to their appointed homes in time. In reporting the story to the Aliyah Committees, Miss Szold concluded: "What I want you to read into it is the courtesy of all Government offices and persons, and our fervent hope that we might be able to continue without intermission to salvage refugees." During the year 1941-2, in fact, most of the accessions to the Aliyah in Palestine were refugee children already in the Land.

Another ship of tragedy, also ironically named—*Salvador*—bearing a human cargo of 350 from Bulgaria, was lost in the Sea of Marmora. One hundred and nineteen souls survived a dreadful night when it grounded; and a few young children who were saved and brought to Stambul were placed in the Ahavah Home. One of the youth workers talked to a rescued boy of what had happened: "And then they took everything we had; and also our home. We made a bundle of a few clothes, and left our village and got on a boat. We were very crowded, and there wasn't room to sleep. We did not have much to eat or drink for many days. Then we were in Turkey, and policemen guarded us. We had food to eat, and it was good. Then we sailed from Turkey. We were more than 300 people. Afterwards we were only about 100 people. Then we came to Palestine. Then my brother and I were brought to Ahavah." It illustrates the wide geographical orbit of the Aliyah during the war that "Ahavah," which received the Bulgarian contingent saved from the *Salvador*, accepted in the same month sixteen young people from Rumania, seven from Austria, seven from Yugoslavia, four from Hungary. The traditional religious spirit of the Home helped to unite the diverse groups. At a welcome which was given to Miss Szold there in 1942, a speaker from each group of children told their story. The earliest of the Aliyah came to the temporary residence at Haifa in

April, 1934. The first band to occupy the new building in the village of Bialik arrived a year later. Then came several from Germany: a group from Vienna in 1938, from Italy in 1939, from Rumania in 1940, from Bulgaria in 1941, and in 1942 a mixed group that had suffered internment for nearly a year in the camp at Athlit because they had not immigration certificates. The child from that group said in words which seem stilted, but are not less revealing: "After a time we grew accustomed in this home to normal living, and started on manual work and regular lessons. From exiles we had become workers in Palestine."

During the years of the troubles some thousands of the youth in Palestine finished their preparation, and were ready to face the world. The larger number continued to form collective groups; but when in 1941 the leaders of the Yishuv called on Jewish young men and women to join the British Forces, many responded. Besides the boys in the Army, Navy and Air Force, girls were enrolled in the Palestine Auxiliary Territorial Service (P.A.T.S.). Miss Szold, who in the First World War had been a pacifist, wrestled with the question whether she should persuade them to enrol. At first she counselled them to stay put; but she finally affirmed the call. Her two homilies were written—in Hebrew—in 1940 and 1941, one while the war was still remote from Palestine, the other when it loomed menacingly near. In the earlier letter she spoke of the great issues of the war and of the Jewish outlook:

"The young people are anxious to make a sacrifice of their strength, their power and even their life. They ask themselves, 'What can I do? How can I fight the enemy who threatens the world, has brought me particularly suffering by tearing up my family bonds, casting my people to the dust and destroying it? How can I make my tiny contribution to help the victory of the good, the truth and the right?' These thoughts cause restlessness, and I would give a word of warning to you. So long as the call for new activity does not come to you with a clear note, so clearly that you cannot misunderstand it, keep quiet. Do not abandon your work and your studies, which you are carrying out here on the land in your training places. Go to this work and study with all earnestness, so that you may draw from them all possible nurture and strength which they can give you. Prepare yourself so long as the opportunity is given to you. That preparation will serve you, whether the future has good or evil in store."

In the second letter she discussed with them the issue of service in the armed forces. There was no conscription in Palestine; but Jewish public opinion was strongly for the voluntary enlistment of

the youth: "We all, old and young, know that the time calls for the last sacrifice, so that those who come after us may not be deprived of the highest purpose of life; and the young men are called upon to make the most complete sacrifice. From you it is asked that you will give even your life. You have not waited to hear these words from me. I have been told of your determination to enrol for military duty even before the call of our Jewish authorities was sent out to those between the ages of twenty and thirty. It stands out that you, the members of the Youth Aliyah, who have in your bodies and souls experienced the ruthless cruelties of the enemy, have had a deep understanding for the duty of the hour. . . . Your resolve to heed the call is a sure proof that you are filled with the conviction; if this previous heritage of humanity disappears, the death sentence is proclaimed against the Jews, body and soul. The war is doubly a Jewish concern. It affects us as members of humanity and also as Jews.

"It is clear to me, then, that, happily, I have nothing to ask of you. And yet I cannot forbear from addressing to you some words of counsel. Because as an eighty-year old woman I am beholden to you, and because I recognise that in a certain measure I stand outside, some thoughts are fixed in me which you in your enthusiasm and your elation may perhaps overlook. Read the twentieth chapter of the Fifth Book of Moses. I would ask you in the spirit of this chapter to put the questions to yourself. On the sincere answering of these questions depends the worth of your sacrifice. My second question to you is put, because most of you are far from your parents. Have you in your thoughts discussed your resolve with your parents, have you tried to imagine how your father and mother would advise you if they were by your side? And in the third place I would ask you to talk over with your Madrichim earnestly the national demands which Jewish opinion has placed before the authorities. You must understand and determine whether those demands are decisive for you. . . .

"I must add one thing: war has now come near to us in Palestine. In many ways the Land of the Bible in which we live is the last fortress of the Jewish people. There are Jews who believe that, if this fortress is captured to-day by our enemy, the whole Jewish people would be so injured by the loss that it could not recover. My personal faith is otherwise. I believe in the strength of the remnant of Israel even if the remnant is small. Only it must be adequate. So those in the Youth Aliyah who cannot or must not fulfil any military duty, the girls and the younger boys who have not yet reached the minimum age, and those who have not yet completed their two years training, the latest immigrants who

arrived only last year and are not yet psychologically prepared, have the duty to devote themselves with all their heart and might to the work of education and training which the Youth Aliyah offers for the building up of the land and the people. . . . My counsel and questioning have but one single purpose: to bring home to you that you may not just say, generally and dogmatically, to one another: 'Join the Army,' or 'Do not enrol,' or 'Do it only under this or that condition.' Where there is no conscription, each individual must search himself deeply and form his own conviction. . . . We have acted in this spirit so far in the Youth Aliyah. Since the first appeal was made, 250 young men of our Movement have enrolled themselves without conditions for military service; sixty of them, although they had reached their eighteenth year, were still in the last months of their training; 190 of them were graduates who had joined new or old Kibbutzim."

The number of volunteers from the Aliyah in the Forces—Army, Navy, and Air Force—by 1943 numbered 1,500. That meant that fully half the young men who were of age to join were enrolled, though most of them could have fairly claimed that they were already engaged in essential war work, in agriculture or industry. The record compared favourably with that of any section of the population of Palestine. Not a few among them made the supreme sacrifice. Twenty-five were lost together among over 100 members of a Jewish transport company, when their ship was torpedoed off the coast of North Africa in May, 1943. They perished on the night of the Sabbath; and a Jewish officer, who was with them in the doomed ship and was rescued, has recorded that on the eve of that day they had read in the Sabbath service passages of the Book of Jonah. He has recorded also that, when they were swimming in the sea after the disaster, they were singing Hebrew songs. A British officer, who was in the convoy with him, remarked that he had never seen such exemplary conduct as that shown by the Jewish soldiers in the convoy. It should be added that some hundreds of the Aliyah waiting in England joined the Forces there. The rest were engaged in agricultural production.

Miss Szold wrote regularly to the members of the Aliyah who were in the Forces. Two of her letters, which were written in September and November, 1941, tell of her thought for the extension of the work and the spiritual well-being of the young men: "Lately the external appearance of the Movement has altered a little, and its shape is different from that to which you were

accustomed, and which you have created together with the Office, the management and the leaders. The latest evolution of international events has caused this change. As you know, it has created the need for bringing over young people from enemy lands after the outbreak of war. One can even say that the enemy took good care that, in spite of everything, young human material should not be lacking for us. The enemy has prepared an army of fugitives—in Latvia, Turkey, Rumania, in all the Balkan countries, and to these we have given our attention. Obviously we could not be content with the receiving of the refugees only, but we had to consider the young people born in those countries to which the refugees escaped.

“This will give you some idea of the frame and the direction of our movement at the present time. The most prominent change is, if we may use such an expression, the multi-coloured mixture of languages. Whereas you had embraced one new language, to-day the teachers and the community of young boys and girls have to overcome the mixture of languages.”

The second epistle tells of progress with the plan for the training of young Palestinians, which is dealt with later.¹ She then turns to their life in the Army:

“... We have been informed by those soldiers who have visited us that their comrades of the Youth Aliyah are endeavouring to keep contact, wherever they may be. We have heard, too, of those who have distinguished themselves in the fulfilment of their military duties and in battle, and the names of the wounded and prisoners of war. This knowledge enables us to accompany you from afar on your difficult road, and strengthens our hand to carry on with our activities in the way which is known to you.

“I hope that those of you who have enlisted have done so out of a deep conviction, out of an understanding of the requirements of this hour, and an understanding of the unhappy position in which the human race and the Jewish people find themselves. I also hope that they have seen it as a civilised and ethical course of action, the way of duty and courage. I wish you especially peace of mind; and may the future bring us the real peace which all of us, you at the front and we at the back, are looking forward to with longing eyes.”

She not only wrote herself, but she encouraged the workers of the Aliyah to keep close touch with the volunteers, and send them gifts to remind them of home. For presents endear absents.

¹ See Chapter 13.

She reached her eightieth year in December, 1940. It was a great occasion for the Aliyah, and above all for her children in Palestine. An assembly gathered to honour her at Ben Shemen, the school which had received the first little group of the Aliyah in 1932. Hundreds came now, delegates from every group, and greeted her. They loaded her with their gifts, the work of their hands, carried out with devoted care, and with remarkable excellence: illuminated records, models of their homes, miniature specimens of their crafts, and the like. The spokesman of the family turned to her and said:

"We feel as though a triumphant song were taking us forward, upward; we will follow the road which we have taken. And you will be with us on the road."

Miss Szold answered them:

"If eighty years were still before me, I should get from this work a reinforcement of strength. I believe I am a truly happy being."

She was indeed "the joyful mother of her children." It was the feast of the Maccabees, and she lit the first candle of the eight-branched candelabra.

She was yet to undertake, after her eightieth year, bigger and more testing tasks than had yet fallen to the enterprise.

CHAPTER 10

THE TEHERAN CHILDREN

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THE MOST DRAMATIC CHILD odyssey of all was completed in the fourth year of the war, when in February, 1943, a transport of 856 Polish-Jewish children arrived in Palestine on the ninth anniversary of the arrival of the first Aliyah group. That was far the largest body to reach the Land at one time. It covered an amazing story of misery, endurance and resourcefulness. In the autumn of 1942, word came to the office in Jerusalem that 450 children of Polish Jews had arrived at Pahlevi, the Persian port on the Caspian Sea. They were part of a group of altogether 14,000 adults and children, Christian and Jewish Poles, civilians and men in the Forces who, after a little, were brought to camps in Teheran. Later reports showed that the number of Jewish children was greater. Of them only about one-fifth were orphans, but four-fifths arrived without their parents. Many of them had been wandering since Poland was overrun in the first months of the war. They had made their way through the Ukraine, Siberia,

Turkestan and Uzbekistan. Many had been abandoned by desperate parents, "compelled by the barbarity of war to entrust them to the mercy of the public as the only chance of safety." Many had spent months in Christian orphanages. The great majority were under the age of the normal bands of the Aliyah. They were children between seven and fourteen; and forty were little infants. All had been for years human flotsam and jetsam. In the words of Miss Szold's report: "They had been sleeping in the woods, half-naked, exposed to disease, eaten by vermin, starved—guiltless. Youth leaders, elder brethren in faith who chanced their way, shepherded them. . . . The Jewish communities through which they passed took them in and cared for them to the best of their ability." The Polish Government maintained the camp at Teheran, and the American Red Cross helped with supplies of food and medicaments.

The Aliyah Office informed the Palestine Government of its willingness to assume responsibility for the education and settlement of the Jewish children in Palestine. That involved an innovation in its activity, because, while hitherto it had brought a small proportion of children of school age to be educated, it was here sponsoring a large group of which the majority would have to be cared for over a long period of years. The Government granted the immigration certificates, and officers of the Jewish Agency were sent to Teheran to arrange the journey. There the Jewish children had been separated from the mass in a special camp, and preparations were made for their transfer to Palestine. At the head of them was a young leader who had devoted himself to youth organisation in Warsaw before the catastrophe. The Teheran Jewish community gave generous help, and the emissaries from Palestine worked with them to restore the children to health, to clothe them, and to begin fitting them for their home. It was hoped that they would be brought without delay by road from Persia across Iraq to the Promised Land. Application was made to the Government of Iraq to allow the transit. But political passions were roused. The Government, which had taken the lead in the Arab resistance to Zionism and to the expansion of the Jewish National Home, refused the small boon, even for children. It was a repetition of the Biblical story about the refusal of the King of Edom to allow the Children of Israel to pass through his territory when they were marching from Egypt through the wilderness to Canaan.

The negotiations were protracted for months, but without avail. Finally, they had to be abandoned; and a ship was obtained to bring the children from the head of the Persian Gulf

by sea. They were shepherded from Teheran across Persia, and happily arrived at their destination without more serious incident. When they reached Suez and the wilderness of Sinai, there were fears of more trouble with the authorities. But this time a helpful British refugee administration in Egypt intervened to speed them to the frontiers of Palestine. It gave a romantic touch that the camp in which the children were lodged when they reached Suez was by the Wells of Moses, on the East side of the Gulf. That was the traditional camping place of the children of Israel after the crossing of the Red Sea when they came out of Egypt. There the children were among another multitude of refugees—from Greece—who were under the care of the British Relief Administration. The camp was to receive during the succeeding months many more Jewish parties arriving from Persia, Aden and Yemen.

When they left Suez the children began to bask in the warm and friendly welcome. At each stopping place of the train the Jewish communities came down in their hosts to load them with gifts. Their immediate destination was Athlit, where they were taken to the Government detention camp for quarantine and inoculation. Miss Szold met them there, and the veteran workers of the Aliyah with her. As the children set foot, as it were, on the Holy Land, one after the other started to cry, thinking of parents or relations who had been killed. A Palestine teacher who had brought his class to meet them had the bright idea of singing folk songs of the Home. The class took up the songs, and the children stopped their crying and joined the chorus.

A Hebrew writer has described the extraordinary feeling of relief which the news of the coming of the children, a veritable remnant of Israel in Europe, brought to the Yishuv. It was a time when the tide of war was turning. The Red Army had occupied Kharkov; the Allied Forces were ejecting the Japanese from the Solomon Islands, and ejecting the Axis armies from North Africa. But the Jews everywhere were in mourning for the destruction of their people. Suddenly, like a bolt from the blue, came the announcement of children resurrected from the huge cemetery of Europe, and waiting at the portals of the Home. On the day they reached Palestine the offices of the national institutions were emptied. Work came to a standstill everywhere; the people thronged to meet them. They came to the stations in carts, on horseback, on bicycles, and most of all on foot. They rushed to the carriages to greet the children, who were still looking ghostly, but bravely waving their blue-white flags. Arabs, too, came to welcome, bringing sacks of oranges, and

blessed them: "May Allah be with you; you are now the children of mankind." A few happy parents found their own children; a few children found brothers and sisters. But the whole Yishuv, as it were, took them in their arms, eager to restore them to health and life. The destruction of Jewry in Central Europe came home personally to every family in the Palestine Yishuv, and likewise the salvation of every child brought a joy personally and individually. Within a month of being placed in their homes, most of the children had become strong and vigorous. They were hardly recognisable by those who had brought them. And when the Feast of Esther was celebrated in March, some of those who had passed months of purgatory in Persia, the land of Queen Esther, played merrily in Hebrew the story of Esther and Ahasuerus, dressed up in Oriental robes and splendour. A month or so later, when a group which was settled was to entertain visitors from another village, they prepared a play in three scenes about their experiences in Samarkand, Uzbekistan and Teheran.

Within a few months of their distribution most of the 800 wanderers were merged into the life of the Palestine children among whom they were placed. It was amazing to see younger ones taking their full part in the lessons of the village school, and the older taking their full part in the field work. They had a preternatural eagerness to learn, so that they might make up for the lost years. The faces still showed signs of their hard experience; but in demeanour they were almost as bright as the native children of the settlements. The active sympathy of the children of the Kevutza helped to work the transformation. In Givat Brenner, for example, when a place for the newcomers was lacking, the elder boys and girls gave up their rooms and lived in tents. It helped also that, there and elsewhere, each younger child was adopted, as it were, into a family. The same eagerness to learn distinguishes the boys and girls who were placed in the town schools of the Orthodox Mizrachi. They want help to catch up to their fellows in the classes, to understand the Bible, which had been a sealed book to them, to change their Yiddish and Polish to Hebrew. Learning is for them the key to life.

Yet the "Teheran children," as they came to be called, presented an embarrassment of problems to the Aliyah Organisation and the Kibbutzim which received them. Neither physical nor mental sifting was possible before they arrived. For three years, and in some cases for four, they had known no schooling, no discipline, no home. They were waifs and strays of a society in collapse. Many were full of spirit, holding strong opinions and

decided ideas of the training that they wanted. And it was not agricultural. For the experience which a few had on a Russian Kolkhoz during their wanderings had turned them against the life of the Kibbutz and hard toil. It required all the patience and resourcefulness of the heads of the Aliyah to set them on the right path. Their years of wandering had made them hard and exacting and suspicious. They thought they were entitled to everything of which they had been deprived for four years; and the emotional reception by the Yishuv encouraged them in that idea. Even the children of school age were quick to lead strike and rebellion if they could not get what they wanted.

Harder problems than those of vocational training were to be faced. Scarcely was the festive reception over when a wretched wrangle broke out in Palestine about their distribution, between the religious and the other groups. Sectional feeling had been stirred concerning them before they arrived. As some were orphans from Orthodox families, the religious party claimed that all should be settled in the Orthodox centres. Some of the older children themselves wished otherwise; and it was alleged that they had been influenced by non-religious leaders of the Aliyah. Feeling boiled up in and outside the land; and an unwelcome and mischievous blare of publicity was raised by contending sectaries. Miss Szold and her adjutant spoke personally with each child, and used their powers of persuasion to influence the older boys and girls to go with their young brothers and sisters to religious homes; but in many cases could not persuade. In the end a way was found of soothing public opinion. But the agitation had shown the need of searching into the place of religion in the Jewish life of Palestine. Something is said about that later.

It was characteristic of Miss Szold's outlook, constantly directed to higher standards and to a larger initiative, that, while the children were still in Teheran, she pointed the lesson to the Youth Aliyah Committees. These 850 children were the heralds of thousands, possibly of tens of thousands, to come soon. "Exemplary action is demanded by this advance guard of our national reinforcement. Thus we must regard these children. We must establish model procedures for the reception, the education, the care and the placing of each child, for their sake, but also for the sake of their successors. From the point of view of Jewish rehabilitation, what we do now must be in the spirit of the post-war reconstruction we dream of. Action must be swift and not niggardly."

Before the contingent reached Palestine, indeed, a larger responsibility was unfolded. During the first three months of 1943,

other transports, bringing over 200 children, arrived from Hungary and the Balkan States via Turkey and Syria. They, too, were an advance guard of thousands who were waiting to be rescued in South-Eastern Europe. The civilised world—that is, all the world outside the Nazi clutches—had been roused to horror by the extermination of Jews, young and old, which was being methodically carried out in Poland. A tempest of appeals broke on the Governments of England and America, to rescue, anyhow, a remnant. And the British Colonial Secretary announced in February that the Government was prepared to facilitate the immigration into Palestine of children, to the number of 30,000 and over, the balance of the quota of immigration of 75,000, which had been fixed in the Government's White Paper of 1939. As a first step in this programme they would make available 4,500 certificates, to be used primarily for children in Bulgaria, Hungary and Rumania. A limited number of adults would be permitted to accompany them. But the main effort should be devoted to saving the children. Thus Youth Aliyah was to be the principal instrument of rescue from the European hell, and the principal instrument of immigration into Palestine. Unhappily the exits from Europe were sealed; the children could not be brought out.

During those early months of 1943, the children brought to Palestine were not limited to those coming from Europe. The chain of rescue was stretched to the Orient, where growing nationalism and the passions roused by war led to attacks on the Jews and harsh legal discrimination. A group came from Bagdad; another from Turkey, children of long-settled Sephardic families who feared the frustration which was meted out to minorities. Later in the year more parties arrived from Turkey almost weekly, and were placed in villages of the Northern Sharon where a few Turkish Jews were among the pioneers, and in the school of Mikveh which dates back to the days of Turkish rule in Palestine. It was not easy to find instructors who understood either of the children's languages, Turkish or the Castilian Spanish which the Jewish communities of the Levant still retain. But, like the Teheran children, they were eager to learn and to acquire Hebrew; and they were eager also to work the soil. That admixture did not generate fresh problems, and it did enrich the human composition of the Yishuv.

A band of Yemenite boys was brought from Aden, and placed in the children's village of Shefeya. They were quickly absorbed into the life of the village, though they kept zealously their Hebrew pronunciation and their separate religious tradition.

They are to build their own habitations in the village; for they are the advance guard of a large body from Yemen.

A smaller band, which was brought during those early months of 1943 from Bombay, had set out originally from Poland. They were a part of the trail of Polish refugees who had wandered through Russia. But they had been taken from the main body and sent with other Polish children to India, through the intervention of a Jewish officer, who hoped that in that way they would get the quicker to Palestine. They were stricken with illness in Bombay; but the Jewish community looked after them, and a young Austrian refugee, who had been marooned himself in India, brought them to Egypt and Palestine. One case was attended by an engaging individual romance. When word came to Jerusalem about the group in India, an announcement was placed in the papers inquiring if any of the relations were in Palestine. A Jewish soldier in the Polish Army serving there read it; and recognised that one of the children was his only daughter, who had been carried off to Russia when he escaped.

Thus the Aliyah Organisation, which is concerned as much with the individual child as with the group and the mass, is occasionally the means of uniting children with parents. It acts in the spirit of the rabbinical maxim, that he who saves one soul is as though he saved the world. At the same time, its scope is now world-wide, and it is realising the words of Jeremiah, who foretold another return of the youth from the captivity: "I will bring them from the North country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth" (Jer. xxxi. 8).

In the latter half of 1943 the gentle stream continued to flow from the East. The full tide from Eastern Europe, Siberia and Uzbekistan, for which preparations were made, was still dammed up. But little bands unshepherded made their way out of those lands across frontiers to Turkey, and were thence helped to reach Palestine. Some larger bands which had wandered across the vast Soviet steppes were finally able to complete their odyssey. The sum total of arrivals in 1943 was a larger accession to Youth Aliyah than that of any previous year of the war. It amounted to over 2,000, and brought the total Aliyah beyond 10,000.

The Oriental element was steadily augmented from Turkey, Yemen and Aden, and by a new tributary from Syria. For Beyrut, Damascus and Aleppo asked for and received their allocation of youth certificates. A group of Syrian Jewish girls arrived towards the end of 1943 and were placed in one of the Girls' Training Farms of the Women's International Zionist Organisation (W.I.Z.O.). Some of them came from the smaller

communities of Homs, Hama and Sidon. They were doubly pioneers in agriculture: amongst women and amongst the Syrian community. They were combined happily with groups of girls of the Yishuv; and for them it was easy to pass from their native Arabic to the kindred Hebrew. The Kevutza of the Turkish girls is called "Fulfilment": the Kevutza of the Syrians "The Dawn."

An estimate was made at the end of the year of the absorptive capacity or, more accurately, of the dwelling accommodation of the Yishuv for the immigrant children. It was immediately in the neighbourhood of 7,500, and plans were made for raising it to 10,000. After ten years of effort the Movement was thinking of rescue in tens of thousands, and no longer in hundreds. In 1934 it had been an achievement to bring a few hundreds. In 1944 it would be possible to multiply the original Aliyah twenty-fold.

CHAPTER II

REGENERATION

THE SIMPLE BUT SIGNIFICANT innovation of Youth Aliyah was to take boys and girls leaving school from their families in countries of Jewish oppression and, before their minds were deformed and their souls seared by frustration, bring them to a new country, a new climate, a new language, and a new activity and conception of life. Its method was not curative so much as creative. Two Hebrew words, almost identical, were inscribed on the flags of the youth: "Banayich bonayich," which means "Thy children shall be thy builders." They should be productive workers, pioneers of the land and a people regenerated. Before the Aliyah of the youth was conceived, a similar idea inspired the creation of the "Halutz"; young men and women turned away from the repression of Europe to be builders of the Home in Palestine. But in that case the pioneers were adults who had formed their resolve, reached the years of discretion, and sifted themselves by a hard discipline in Europe for their choice. Here adolescent boys and girls, who could not yet form a clear resolve, were leaving their families to be transformed. The first wards of the Aliyah were drawn from that Jewish community which had been the most intellectual and the most urban. It was an added difficulty that the boys and girls who were to be transplanted had passed through an ordeal of frustration, scorn and humiliation. They had been made to feel that they belonged to an accursed,

an inferior and a sub-human people, unfit for the society of their non-Jewish fellows; and very many of them had, on the other hand, no root in Jewish tradition, culture and religion, little pride of race or nationality. Many did not know why they suffered, and were dazed and confused. It was often a bitter necessity, rather than an inner conviction, which made them or their parents ask for them to be enrolled in the lists of the Youth Aliyah.

The first steps to prepare them were taken in the European country. From the first there were more applications than immigration certificates. Full particulars of each applicant and his family were obtained; and a statement of the reason for choosing Palestine. If they were chosen and passed a medical examination, they went for a few months to a camp or hostel in the country, away from their family and their old environment. They were to get the first notions of work on the land, of physical labour for six hours a day, of Hebrew and of life in a group. The system which was designed from the outset, and has remained, was that each group of twenty to thirty should be guided by an instructor, known by the Hebrew name *Madrich*—that is, one who shows the way. He was not a counterpart of the *Fuhrer* of the Hitler Youth, but rather a combination of big brother and teacher. The Zionist youth bands provided a number of these instructors in Europe; and the original intention was that, when their charges obtained certificates for Palestine, they should accompany them and be with them in their two years of preparation. Their guidance was supplemented by young pioneers from Palestine, some of them settlers who had gone out years before from Germany, had become Hebrews in speech and mind, and so could help others in the change of sky and mind. The *Madrich* from Palestine was a new type of apostle: and the training hostels were a kind of Palestine outpost.

We have a vista of groups in the European hostels in 1933 from a teacher who had come from Palestine. The young people divided themselves into sections, each with its own organisation and cultural interests based on the ideas of the youth groups (*Buende*) to which they belonged. They had no sense of a democratic order. For they had been brought up in an authoritarian school; they looked to the teacher for everything, reluctant to take any responsibility, and seemed to have no power of thinking individually. They lacked, too, a common spiritual life, and in the long evenings were dull and dispirited. Their old German world was in confusion and chaos, and they had not formed an idea of a new Jewish society. The teacher-guide had to help them recover self-respect, to give them the sense of belonging

to a community and of being wanted; and he had also to take the place of the parent in bringing sympathy and affection for each boy and girl.

Another Palestine "apostle" has described the conditions during that same year in a hostel of the Aliyah which P'au Freier had established for the children brought in from the smaller towns, where Jews could hardly breathe. The children lived together at the hostel and attended school half the day. "There they hear for the first time of the land of Israel, the life of the farmers in the Jewish villages, Jewish self-defence; their crumbling Jewish consciousness is strengthening and rebuilding. It is a small and lonely island in the midst of a hostile sea. The school has been placed in a building belonging to the synagogue. The language is Hebrew. At the lesson the children learn about their future homeland. The wall is decorated with a large map of Palestine. The teacher points to the map: 'Here is Haifa; there is the railway winding through the Valley of Jezreel, this is Mount Gilboa, where Saul and Jonathan were slain, and from that dark spot on the map comes our Palestine friend who is to-day attending our lesson.' All eyes turn to me. They ask me to tell them about the Valley of Jezreel, the colour of the soil, the mountains and the rivers. How often does one plough? Which fruits are grown in Palestine? With the thoroughness typical of German Jewish youth, they want to know everything, every fact. One girl asks me to show her on the map the road system. One of the boys points on the map the sources of the Jordan. The teacher is proud and happy, but I wonder: will these children, once they have reached Palestine, preserve their romantic longing for knowledge of their homeland, or will it have become just 'Geography' to them?" The sceptical caution was not justified. The sight of Palestine did not destroy the "romance": over and over again it transformed boys and girls who had been listless and dispirited in Europe.

Another early problem of the Aliyah was the storm of the conflict in the children about leaving their parents. "The question which the youngsters discuss over and over again is: 'What is going to be done about our parents? They may have to emigrate to far countries. If we join the Aliyah, how can we hope ever to see them again? Of course, those are right who say that the only future for Jewish youth lies in Eretz Israel; but it is not an easy decision.' " The role of parent and child was reversed. It often was the child who felt the anxiety so deeply that he could not break away from the home. In most of the young minds, however, hope sprang up, and new ideas began to take shape. The three

governing principles of manual work, study and community were associated with the spirit of collective adventure. The change in outlook after a few months was visible. The children of the Youth Aliyah in Germany were different from others. They held themselves erect, and had a light in their eyes; amid the dejection of the moral ghetto, they would sing and dance.

Then came the exciting day of departure. Parties of fifty to one hundred would travel together, accompanied by their Madrich, who taught them on the way. The voyage through the enchanted Mediterranean gave not only a continuous excitement, but opportunity for learning about Palestine and Jewish history and for Hebrew stammering. These groups of boys and girls going to the land were a bright element on the ships that carried the thousands of tourists to Palestine in the years of prosperity, 1934-6. When the first days of elation were over, the groups distributed in their villages would start the serious work of education and transformation. The number in each village was limited, so that the young immigrant was not tempted to form a class apart, but should be fully integrated into the life of the settlers and their children. They were not to go to school in the sense of a special building; a room of the Aliyah house served for studies. But the settlement as a whole was the school, and the settlers were the teachers. The Madrich who had been with them in Europe might continue his function, but the principal guidance was given henceforth by selected young men and women of Palestine and often of the Kibbutz itself.

The day was divided into two periods, the morning for labour, the afternoon for learning; and the eve was given to reading, talks and songs and dance. The young people were allowed in the first weeks to do all manner of work in the village as they pleased, so that their instructors should find their bent. Then they were assigned to special tasks, some to the vegetable garden, others to the tree-nurseries, the sanitary work, the kitchen. Each boy and girl should become a master in one job, and then pass to another. They were at once pupils and partners in the building-up. The lessons in the afternoon were done in common, except that they might be divided for purposes of Hebrew study. The time-table provided eighteen hours of instruction in a week; twelve for Hebrew, three for Jewish history, two for agricultural theory, and one for geography of Palestine. The last study was amplified and made vivid by excursions through the land, till the Arab revolt for a time made a "Tiyul" impossible, or restricted it to the near settlements and towns. These journeys, in a land in which you tread on history wherever you go, did more than anything else in

the training stage to turn the heart of the children to the country of their fathers, and to make the Bible story vivid.

The Madrich volunteered for the work, as part of the service of the community, for two years. Like his young charges, he would do his labour in the field for half a day, and then instruct and guide the newcomers for the other half. He was chosen by the Kevutza on account of his enthusiasm for the building of the Home, and of his sympathy and understanding for the young. His was a labour of sacrifice and love, because he had to give his adopted family all his free hours; and, if he were married, could see little of his wife and children. It was written of them during the year of the troubles: "They were young men who work in the fields in the morning, teach our youth in the afternoon, and stand guard all night." When the parties began to arrive more frequently and in larger numbers, the proposal was made that the Madrich should work for four years, and be the guide of two successive groups. Thus his experience would be more valuably used than by his advice to a successor, who must start building his experience afresh. But the proposal was rejected at a conference by a large majority of the instructors. They would be separated too long from their proper work, their community, their family. They were not like teachers of a school, members of a profession, but elder comrades. And service as instructor must be treated as a temporary public duty.

Experience showed after a little that the Madrich who came from Europe was not always qualified to inspire the youth in the new life, because he did not know its intimate lights and shades. So more and more the guidance was entrusted to those in the land. And the problem of finding good instructors and training them has become a big issue. The Madrich is attached to the party or section of the Labour movement to which the village belongs. And a political direction in his approach is unavoidable. The Central Office, however, has as one of its functions to maintain some kind of unified educational structure unaffected by party divisions.

Besides the two instructors for each group of fifty, a young woman is allotted to the group as a matron, to see to the physical well-being of all and to guide the girls in domestic duties. Beyond those specific tasks, she is the confidant of the children—and there are many—who need motherly care and affection. A weekly report on each boy and girl is sent to the Head Office in Jerusalem. And in every village a band of workers, which includes any members of the collective who take part in the preparation, are responsible together for the well-being of the children. In the

early days acclimatisation was a serious concern. Many suffered from malaria and fevers; the heat, particularly in the Jordan Valley, was exhaustive of vitality. But that stage soon passed.

It would be giving a false picture to represent that the education for physical work, for the community and the "Moledet," always reached the heart of the youth and won his assent. Resistance there was both to the ideal of labour and, more often, to the Hebrew studies. After the first elation had passed, some had regrets and doubts. The principles of the movement did not countenance any compulsion; moral suasion and personal influence must do what they could, and if they failed, the dissenter must go his way. The question is constantly iterated in the gatherings of the instructors and workers; how to combat the reluctance or the resistance. And reliance is placed most hopefully on the inspiration of the land itself. A rabbinical maxim, "The air of the land of Israel makes wise," has been proved true.

Not all the members of the apprenticed group adjust themselves happily to their comrades. It is necessary at times to change the place of those who after trial cannot live happily with the rest, and to try a fresh blending. One rule, which has had to be strictly observed, is that the boys and girls during their first year of apprenticeship shall not take an individual holiday away from their comrades and stay with relations in Palestine. For experience showed that the break from the group with the family in the town had an unsettling effect. In a few cases a political Communist enthusiasm appeared, and the Communist cell had to be removed because it tended to be subversive. A few are spewed out from the group by their comrades because of unsocial conduct. These are the personal problems with which the Madrich has constantly to grapple.

The adjustment was more difficult with the later arrivals than with the earlier pioneers, because the groups after 1938 were perforce less selected. All had suffered from years of Nazi-imposed degradation; and many children had been crushed by their affliction and trial. They were weak-willed: they had suffered too much in Europe to be capable for a time of an individual or collective effort.

The transplantation of thousands of boys and girls has given a unique opportunity for testing education problems. One of the early discoveries was the failure of unmixed groups, particularly of girls. In the first years, before the absorptive capacity of the collective and the co-operative villages had been revealed, parties of girls were placed in the centres for horticultural training. They did not thrive. They lacked the stimulus which

was found in the collective settlements, with their eager life of enthusiastic young men and women. The girls, it was said, developed the boarding-school temperament; and the placing of girls in separate centres had the additional disadvantage of impairing the balance between boys and girls in the mixed groups. Sex questions naturally are a permanent concern; and the movement has engaged some of the psychiatric talent, with which the Yishuv is endowed, to cope with them. Early marriages are encouraged. It is comparatively rare for the young men and women who have been together in the groups from Europe to marry each other. They look for their mate to the pioneers in the land, or to those who have been born and bred in the land. That tendency happily makes for integration.

Another lesson of the early years was that the children grew up more happily and were more completely absorbed in the larger villages, where they were a part of the teeming life of hundreds, and in close touch with the sentiments, the ideals and emotions of a body of adult workers. The earlier groups that came from Germany could be placed in settlements which shared their particular ideology. But later, when the bulk of the groups were composed of young persons drawn from several countries, and not belonging to a youth "Bund," that harmonious allocation was no longer possible, and more reliance had to be placed on the general atmosphere. The supreme quality of the education is that it combines study and life. The youth learn and labour in the midst of a working community. They are doing serviceable things from the moment they come to the Land.

The collective society share the sense of collective responsibility, and the members of a Kevutza feel that a valuable charge has been entrusted to them. The three principles of the group life are (1) manual labour, which is the pride of the Yishuv; (2) Hebrew culture, which means to make Hebrew the language of everyday life and thought; and, lastly (3), the collective society based on the co-operation and equality of its members, on mutual aid and democratic decision. The settlement breathes the joy of work, and almost every boy and girl responds to the call to spurn delights and live laborious days. It is more difficult to acquire the cultural and spiritual outlook of the society. The struggle with the Hebrew language is the harder, because of the physical weariness from the unusual physical labour. The instructors were at first forced to talk to their charges in a mixture of Hebrew, German and Yiddish. And that did not help to a close relationship. Then the young people began slowly to speak Hebrew and to grapple with its impossible grammar,

After a year they might know enough for the work, but yet they could not express themselves freely or grasp through Hebrew all the educational subjects. So they had, at the same time, to keep up their German and read German books about the sciences.

These newcomers were Jews of European faith. It would not be a service to Palestine that they should drop altogether their European heritage, or discard from their minds the influence of 2,000 years of Jewish history in Europe. That would be to incur the reproach of the Jewish life in Communist Russia, that it sought to crush out the memory of the past, and start the history and loyalty of young Jews with the work of the Revolution.

Yet Hebrew is a necessary link not only between the Aliyah and the settlement, but also between the German and the East-European Jews living together in the land; and it is a link of the Jewish present with the Judean past. Miss Szold had experienced the hardship of that acquisition of the Hebrew language, so that it should be the natural instrument of thought and speech. She asked herself whether the need of learning the new language, utterly different from the accustomed speech, was an added irritation, and stood in the way of adjustment from individual to group life, from the temperate zone to the semi-tropical environment. She had answered the question herself, and she took abundant care that the children should be assisted and have abundant time in answering it. The Aliyah Office devoted special care to that part of their education, and she could write some years later: "The outstanding wonder is the ease with which the Hebrew language is handled by the young people, who have known it two years ago only as a language of prayer and debate. Now it is a language for them of free and festive intercourse." Ancestral memory helps. It is a sign of the acceptance of Hebrew that a Palestine weekly paper, which is published in German for the immigrants from Western Europe, has never been read by the Youth Groups. Yet for many Hebrew is long a half-acquired tongue restricting expression.

The study of Jewish history was not less hard. Many of the youth from Germany had no idea of the past of Israel, and the story of the sufferings and wanderings in the Dark and Middle Ages repelled and provoked. It was too reminiscent of the sufferings from which they had been delivered. The teacher therefore must dwell more on the heroic periods of the Bible and of the struggle with Rome, or on the romantic account of the building of the National Home by the last and the present generation. The two-year programme of education included 220 hours of history; and two weeks were set aside each year for

journeys through the country which helped to give flesh and blood to the story. For many of the later groups it was necessary to include lessons in world history, because they arrived without understanding of the movements of modern times, the French, the Industrial and the Russian Revolutions. And for the Socialist transformation a background of knowledge must be added to the life in a Socialist community. Something, too, of political economy must be in the programme.

The principal instructors and the principal educators in Palestine were formed into a committee of education which plan and direct the activities. Two senior Madrichim are its staff. They constantly visit the groups and discuss the problems with the local Madrichim, and advise them by circulars. Simple Hebrew books are prepared for the teachers, some dealing with economics and the natural sciences, others with sex problems and the like. The special booklets for the pupils include not only chapters on periods of Jewish history, geography of Palestine and elementary biology, but also stories of the Greek tragedies of Æschylus and Sophocles. For as the educational standard of the immigrant children from Nazi-oppressed territories declined, the Movement recognised an obligation to fill the gaps of the education. As it is said in a report of 1943: "The need is something that lies partly within the domain of the higher classes of the elementary school, partly within the domain of the secondary school, and partly partakes of the character of adult education." Periodically conferences of the group leaders are held to consider the curriculum and problems of adolescence. At these meetings, normally held each half-year, the growing band of instructors gather to discuss for a day or two their difficulties, their methods of work, and their plans. The conferences started with a gathering of twenty; they became by the early years of the war an assembly of 500. A director of the Head Office regularly opens them with an address on the vexed problems of the Movement, and the discussion is full and frank; not seldom it is an accounting of the soul.

Special courses have been arranged at the Hebrew University for the education of the educators, and "seminaries" for a week or more are organised for intensive preparation. So the "Movement" justifies that name, and is equipped with a permanent human laboratory. A bi-monthly periodical gives to the instructors the conclusions of the human research.

The Head Office in Jerusalem under Miss Szold is a guide of the guides and the ultimate court of appeal. Inevitably misfits are found in the groups, boys or girls who are not strong enough

for physical work, or who cannot sink their intellectual longings, or cannot in the end suppress their individuality to fit into the life of the community and find satisfaction in it. It is the task of the Madrich in the first place to try to resolve these conflicts, and if that is beyond him, to refer it to the group of workers in the settlement. If they are unable to find the solution, the case is referred to the Head Office. Miss Szold, with her fundamental faith in regarding each child as an individual member of the family, finally has the boy or girl to see her, and searches for the way of understanding. Transfer to a technical school or to a teacher's college, because of a special intellectual leaning, may be the way out of the difficulty. And if the child has parents or relations in the land, and is firm in the desire to go to them, that, too, is arranged. A few cases remain which have to be disposed of by special care.

In 1940 a statistical study was made of the graduates of the Aliyah, to ascertain how many had remained in agriculture, how many in the collective groups, how many had turned to individual life in the towns, how many had gone to their parents, and so forth. One tenth of those placed for agricultural training failed to stay on the land at the end of their second year. As is to be expected, the greater part of those who pass from their training into a collective agricultural group have been trained in a collective community, and not in a co-operative village or school. At the same time a considerable proportion of those trained in such villages and schools finally pass to a Kibbutz. Many who turned to the individual career have found their way during the war to the armed forces and to the police. Of the trades building in some form is the most common. Surprisingly few are students in the University or High School, only sixteen out of 5,000; and that in a generation of which a large proportion would normally have pursued academic studies. Less than one twentieth of the immigrant youth had left the country during the ten years of the survey; and those that went were usually called away by some family demand.

Part only of the Aliyah were placed for education in collective villages. During the twenty years after the First World War, the Jewish agricultural community of Palestine was built up largely by villages of smallholders who worked as a co-operative group and adhered to the principle of self-labour, by which they meant that the work of the holding was done by members of the family, without hired labour. The co-operative village of Nahalal, with its fine agricultural school for girls, was among the first to respond to the appeal of the Aliyah. A group of fifty children were placed

there in 1936. And subsequently many of the smallholder settlements offered to receive apprentices. It might have been expected that the life in the family and the family affection combined with the comradeship of the group would have been popular. It would seem easier for the newcomer to learn Hebrew in a family among Palestine children; and something of the old home life would be preserved. But perhaps for that very reason the co-operative village was not popular with the young people ardent to be pioneers of a new order. The preliminary preparation in a group also predisposed the youth against the family village. Not seldom they found it difficult to adjust themselves to the ways of the particular family with whom they were placed; and the hosts on their part could not invariably find the golden thread. That added an element of effort and strain to the transformation. On the other hand, the children in the Moshav were more independent than those in the Kibbutz, because less subject to the competitive indoctrination of the political parties in the Labour Movement, which is constant in the collective village. About a tithe of the Aliyah have elected to go to, or be placed in, the co-operative villages; but a general disfavour towards them has lingered.

A much larger proportion were in more formal educational institutions; the children's villages of Ben Shemen and Shefeya, the Ahavah Home in Haifa Bay, the Technical Schools of Haifa, Yagur and Tel-Aviv, the old agricultural School of Mikveh Israel and a newly-founded school of the kind at Magdiel, both in Sharon, the Trade and Secondary Schools for orthodox boys and girls in the towns. Altogether twenty educational institutions provide for about one-half of the Aliyah. The "Agudat Israel," which represents the most orthodox section, had but two agricultural settlements; so most of its young people had to be placed exceptionally in urban hostels. But in most of the other schools, the preparation is for agricultural or manual work and not for intellectual callings. The younger children have a longer preparation than the two years which is the norm for the youth; and again the pattern of education is to form self-governing groups, and in the school itself prepare members of a democratic, co-operative community.

† Dr. Lehmann, the head of Ben Shemen, has made that idea the foundation of his institute, from the time it was an orphanage of fifty till it became a community of 750, mostly of the Aliyah; and has laid stress on the part which the artistic and emotional forms of recreation should play. The written word and the book are not so important in these novel conditions of education. The children

have fashioned an open-air amphitheatre, write Hebrew plays on Palestine and Jewish history and compose ballets. Classical music is indeed one of the gifts which the children from Germany brought to the land. They, on their part, learn in the land the chassidic songs and the folk dances. Weaving and other handicrafts are a part of the village education; and the children learn to make beautiful things for their homes. As the village grew, Dr. Lehmann added to it a school for higher agricultural training, which would fit its graduates as completely as the agricultural colleges of Mikveh and Tabor. In order to avoid the impress of a large paternal institution, the young people, when they reach the youth age, fifteen to sixteen, are encouraged to choose the Palestine social group to which they will be attached. Separate homes are arranged for those belonging to the Young Guard, the Maccabee, the United Kibbutz; and another for those who have not yet made up their minds. A representative appointed by the social group concerned lives in each home, and an exchange of opinion on the social problems is fostered, so that in the children's village the life of the adult community is reflected. But the intrusion of political propaganda into the education, which is a feature of the Aliyah system in all its training places, has its disadvantages.

The children at Ben Shemen are brought in touch with the Arab villagers; for the director has been a leading spirit in the movement for the good neighbour, and has recently written a striking book on the principle of reorienting the Jewish child who comes from Europe. He has put that principle into practice, and encourages the children to visit neighbouring Arab countries. A happy outcome of the World War in Palestine was that it brought internal truce, so that the former friendly relations between Jewish village and Arab village, which existed before the troubles of 1936-9, could be renewed at Ben Shemen.

The other children's village, Shefeya, has established its own tradition in self-government or, as it is called, "with-government" of the children. It had been the scene of the first experiment in agricultural training of Jewish orphaned children after the First World War, and had become a permanent children's home with that purpose after 1920.¹ For twenty years it has enjoyed the uninterrupted direction of Dr. Fuerst, an educationist from Hungary who had the vision of the Youth Aliyah before the Aliyah arrived. The Junior Hadassah Organisation of America, formed by boys and girls as an offshoot of the Women's Hadassah

¹ See Chapter 3.

took Shefeya under its wing; and through its help the children's community has been enlarged to receive both younger wards and youth groups of the Aliyah. In 1939 a group from Germany and Central Europe, many of them orphans, whose fathers had been done to death in the pogroms of November, 1938, joined the village community of Jewish children from many lands, from the Oriental communities, Kurdistan and the Caucasus, Morocco and Yemen, as well as from Poland and Lithuania. During the war years other groups of the Aliyah have come from the Orient. One Madrich is a Yemenite trained in the Teachers' Seminary of Jerusalem and then in a teachers' college in England, and therefore fitted to bring them to an understanding of modern standards.

The discipline of the village requires that the children shall do everything themselves, clean the houses, cook the food, plant the gardens, tend the animals, make their clothes. Physical work is the common denominator. Children from varied environments might not get on easily together in the classroom, but each could find its excellence in the work of the hand. The beauty of the place, which is set on the lower hills of the Carmel amid its woodland, and the physical work itself have a healing virtue for those who have been through tribulation. The director stresses the physiology rather than the ideology of work, the feeling that production brings physical and mental health to the distressed. Around the original house the children planted, during the years of the troubles, when they could not go far afield, flower gardens and rock gardens. Then during the war, through the generosity of Junior Hadassah, they have been able to develop a model farm with cows and chickens, orchard, olive groves and corn-land. The former High Commissioner for Palestine, General Sir Arthur Wauchope, was a generous benefactor, and gave the means for the making by the children of a swimming-pool.

The administration is carried out in partnership by the children and the teachers. Six youths are elected by the whole body representing the different age groups, and each has a special department or ministry. They confer with the Director or one of the principal teachers on all the plans. The distribution of clothing is carried out through co-operative groups of children, almost all preferring that form to the collective sharing of clothes. The franchise is given to those who have been six months in the village, and teaching of citizenship is an integral part of the education. So, too, is the teaching of Arabic. Art has its place in the life; the children from the Eastern countries within a short time share with those from the West the appreciation of the music

of Mozart and Beethoven; and the outstanding musical artist is a young Jewess of Bokhara.

Miss Engel tabulated in 1940 the story of some of the Aliyah boys and girls brought there in 1939; and the record may be taken as an example. One was the son of a lawyer and town councillor of Slovakian Brunn (Bratislava), who was arrested and done to death; two were daughters of a Polish Jew living in Germany who also was a victim of those outrages. Another was an orphan child from Berlin, taken to Holland and trained there for a year. Another was the child of a Christian father who became a Jew, and then under the Nazi pressure reverted to Christianity and tried to make the boy a Christian. The parents of another set out for Shanghai during the war, but were able to land on the way at Cyprus; and the boy had been brought from Cyprus. A girl had made her way illegally into Holland, and been rescued there by the Youth Aliyah Committee. The writer visited Shefeya three years later, and found amongst the children others with a tragic story; a girl whose parents were drowned when the *Patria* was sunk; another whose mother put an end to her own life. And these children seemed happy with their fellows.

A third school to which the younger wards were taken in the year of crisis was in Jerusalem itself. It was named after Julian Mack, one of the American benefactors of Palestine, and was directed by an American Jewess who has made modern education in Palestine her life's work. The school, though close to the old city, had its garden and workshops. It occupied what had been the original Jewish city hospital and was the hospital of Hadassah for twenty years. There, as at Shefeya, neglected Jewish children were gathered from communities of the East and West. The Aliyah children placed with them spent two years in the school, learning manual work and gardening, the Hebrew language and lore of Palestine, and often, too, the elements of Judaism, till they were prepared to go out to a village for their apprenticeship on the land.

This later extension of the Aliyah to younger children from Europe was combined with the extension to underprivileged children born and reared in Palestine;¹ and known as the "Aliyah Pnimit"—the Inner March. Again it was part of the educational ideal to mingle the rescued children from Europe, who were wise, or at least experienced, beyond their years, with the simpler children from families whose lot had been hard and frustrated, not by cruelty, but by lack of opportunity. The Aliyah has during the ten years worked out, then, in its diverse homes an

¹ See Chapter 12.

original system of education for action, sure to its mark and showing itself adaptable to new needs and circumstances.

The problem of Jewish religious education in the homeland, which has been touched upon in the account of the coming of the children from Poland through Persia in 1943, has still to be solved. It is not a special problem of Youth Aliyah, but rather of the general upbuilding of the National Home. Inevitably many of the young pioneers who came to redeem the land and to engage in productive work brought the spirit of reaction against the exact regulation of life according to tradition in the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe. Freedom from the clogs of religious tradition seemed to them to be a part of regeneration; and the uninspired religious school of the ghetto was a part of the old order which must be swept away. The educational tendencies of Western Europe, the anti-clericalism of France and Germany, as well as the revolutionary spirit of Communist Russia had their influence. And the Jewish teacher was prone, like the Gentile teacher in many countries of Europe, to turn the national ideal itself into a religion. The building of the home, the return to productive life and to Nature, the austere discipline of pioneering, these were the ideals to be instilled. It was overlooked that in Judaism religion and nationality have been fused indissolubly through the ages, and that a Jewish nationalism without religion is distorted as the denationalised Judaism of the assimilating Reform movement, against which Zionism was in part a protest.

At present two wings of the pioneer movement have taken a clear standpoint towards the religious problem. The Orthodox section of the Mizrachi or Bachad hold enthusiastically and steadfastly in their settlements and educational groups to the full Jewish tradition. They believe that it is part of Judaism to be concerned with the social structure. For two fundamental principles of the religion are involved. All wealth is of God and only loaned to man; and men are brothers and must co-operate with each other. The HaShomer HaZair, the "Young Guard," hold as enthusiastically to the Marxist materialism and definitely oppose the religious tradition. The main body in the collective and co-operative settlements, however, have no decisive philosophy about the place of Judaism or its traditional observance. But the general outlook is one of freedom in such things, interpreted in the sense of absence of teaching.

The religious groups are, indeed, conscious of the need for fresh religious inspiration, for a deeper understanding amongst the young of why they should remain religious Jews. They realise the gulf between their own outlook and that of their

fathers. The ceremony has no longer the same significance and is in danger of passing into formalism. The magazines of the groups frequently discuss the topic of religion. One boy complains that they lack a plan of life which will give a meaning to the institutions they observe, another that the practice without the effort to establish faith is unsatisfying. Another is stirred to fresh consciousness by reading the Hebrew Book of Job. It is inevitable that time must be given before the whole body can attain the wanted harmony.

For many of these young persons who come from Central Europe, the need for teaching and understanding of Judaism is greater than for the older settlers derived from communities which had a strong background of Jewish tradition. For they are from families which professed no religious life at all, or, being professedly Christian and of Jewish race, were flung back into the Jewish fold. For them Judaism must be taught and interpreted if it is to be an inspiring faith. The influence of the land and history will do much, but definite spiritual guidance is wanted. Just as enthusiasm is stirred for the productive and the communal society, so it may be stirred for Judaism as a way of life and a conception of the universe. For the German youth, for whom a philosophy has been an inherent intellectual necessity, regeneration in Palestine will mean a fresh examination of the relation of Judaism, as embodied in the Bible book, to the land of the Bible and the language of the Bible. They will not lose in the Land of Israel the ardour for "mental strife" of which the English poet spoke as the condition for building Jerusalem. Secular enthusiasm is not enough.

In the war years and in face of the annihilation of Jewry in Europe, the craving for some universal faith was stressed. A dull sense of despair and pessimism came over these bands when the news of the collapse of France and the anti-Jewish savagery reached them. They needed some inner light in the darkness of the outer world. The teacher must be prepared to answer questions about the future order. To give them some philosophy of the world, as one recorded, he turned to the classical literature, and read them passages from the *Antigone* of Sophocles, *Prometheus* of Æschylus, *Don Carlos* of Schiller, *War and Peace* of Tolstoy, the plays of Ibsen. He added that he read also prayers recited in the synagogue on the penitential days of the Jewish calendar between the New Year and the Day of Atonement.

A meeting of the instructors and officers of the Movement was held in the summer of 1940, to discuss what should be done to strengthen the moral education and the tottering faith. The

warning was given that the children for the most part did not understand how to associate nationalism with internationalism, and they should have guidance. It was generally agreed that a purpose of the teaching should be to help the youth to grasp the spirit of Judaism as well as to take root in the land. During the war years there have been signs of a stress on the political and the military aspect of nationalism among the young.

The guiding principle of the Aliyah Office hitherto has been to let each boy and girl, if over the age of fourteen, be brought up in that religious environment which they want for themselves, or, if they were younger, which their parents want for them. In the collective villages, for the most part, the traditional religious life is not generally observed. Nevertheless, a religious spirit is inherent in the sense of living for the community and in the ardour for regenerating the Jewish people and redeeming the land of Israel. In their daily work they are in touch with the scenes of Israel's history and with its extraordinary emphasis on the spiritual life; and the genius of the place calls them away from materialistic dogmas. An English political leader once wrote of the Thames as "liquid history." The Land of Israel is solid history. Tilling and ploughing the land, the young group occasionally turn up the relics of that history, floors of synagogues of the early centuries, Hebrew inscriptions, sepulchral urns. And they are as interested in the past records as in the new machines. Hence, while in the first period to many of them labour was worship—the Hebrew word for the two things is the same—after a time many had yearnings for something else. And that something has yet to be found.

A passage in a novel of the Englishwoman George Eliot, who was moved by the travail of Israel in a humaner age, is apt: "There is a sense in which the worthy child of a nation that has brought forth illustrious prophets, high and unique among the poets of the world, is bound by visions. Is bound? Yes, for the effective bond of human action is feeling, and the worthy child of a people owning the triple name of Hebrew, Israel and Jew feels his kinship with the glories and the sorrows, the degradation and the possible renovation of his national family." The vision of which George Eliot was conscious has in fact already bound together the members of the bands. But there is beyond that a greater Hebrew conception, enshrined in the Bible, which is again their possession. For the prophets of Israel, the establishment of the idea of a transcendent Unity and a universal order was an integral part of the faith in the return to Zion. And it may be that the pilgrim youth will be attended also on their upward way by

that "vision splendid." Aliyah, we have noted, means the spiritual ascent; and the march of the youth is to their faith as well as to their land.

NOTE

It is interesting to compare the Jewish effort for preparation of the youth for life on the land in Palestine with the efforts made in the British Commonwealth of Nations for the settlement of British children in the vast spaces of the Dominions. After the First World War, a movement was encouraged to take the youth from the crowded industrial cities of Britain to the virgin soil of Canada and Australia; and it was hoped that thousands of boys and girls would be attracted to the open life. A pioneer of that movement was a young man from Rhodesia, Kingsley Fairbridge, who, after some years at Oxford, devoted his life to a movement of Empire settlement. He had a vision of—

*"An empire peopled with nothing—a country
Abandoned to emptiness, yearning for people,
A mother well fit for the birth of a nation."*

He was able to establish the first children's village in Western Australia in 1912. His plan was to take children from the elementary schools at the age of twelve to thirteen, educate them for five years on the land in the Dominion, and then send out the boys as agricultural workers and the girls as domestic helps on farms. The movement has grown in the last twenty-five years, both in Canada and Australia. It is now responsible for five farm-schools with about 1,200 children, almost all drawn from the poorest homes in Britain. A parallel movement, at present exclusively developed in Australia, aims at bringing to the Commonwealth older boys who have finished school, and placing them directly on the land, first as workers with Australian farmers, but with the prospect of becoming themselves farmers. The basis of the plan is that an Australian citizen is a "Big Brother" to the immigrant, and makes himself morally responsible for the boy's welfare from the day he reaches Australia till he comes of age. That movement, launched in 1925, was successful in sending to Australia in five years 2,000 boys, almost all of whom were placed and remained on the land. It was checked in 1930, when emigration to Australia was suspended, and was not renewed till 1938. The two efforts together have brought to the British Dominions some 5,000 boys and girls who have been fitted for agriculture and have become useful members of the country community. They have not developed anything like a national ideal or a youth drive of "Return to the land." They have remained in the sphere of philanthropy, touching a fringe of the young manhood both in the Mother Country and in the Dominion. The Jewish youth movement has been inspired by a more urgent purpose, a more resolute direction, a bolder educational method; and within ten years, a period of almost unparalleled difficulty, it has been instrumental in bringing to the land a much larger body and nourishing a surer hope. Its example may influence the British peoples in the large issues of resettlement after the war.

IV. HARVEST

CHAPTER 12

GRADUATES OF THE YOUTH ALIYAH

THE PLAN OF YOUTH ALIYAH is that, after two years of apprenticeship in the settlements or institutions, the boys and girls should stand on their own feet and choose their way of life. At the age of eighteen to nineteen they should become responsible for their destiny. They should have a free choice: whether to remain in agriculture or turn to industry or some other calling; whether to remain in a collective community, or turn to one of the villages composed of individual small-holders within the co-operative society; whether to remain with the group or to seek individual livelihood in town or country. The social atmosphere of the place, indeed, and the guidance of the Madrich, which it is hard to withstand, induce powerfully a leaning towards the rural collective enterprise; and the large majority are moved by it. To choose the individual career incurs the reproach of being a "lonely," "solitary" backslider. They know of the hope that they shall form a fresh group planted on the soil and imbued with the spirit of the Kevutza, and so carry on the tradition. In the second year of apprenticeship, they regularly begin to discuss the future, and they form what they call a "grain"¹ of the society which they will sow in the soil of the National Home. It is a Jewish characteristic to be concerned about the final purpose; and they ponder long before decision. The "grain" is composed of those who decide to stay together. Their new settlement should not be quite like others in the country, but distinctive. They envy the founders of the Kevutza where they are sojourning, because that group has created an outpost. They are ardent to explore rough regions, to conquer the wilderness, like their predecessors, and to build their own, but more beautiful, home.

Yet most of them after two years do not feel sure of their powers of building, or equipped to face life's difficulties unaided. They are between child and adult, not yet masters of their soul, or

¹ The national poet, Bialik, wrote (in Hebrew):

*"If you have planted a 'grain,' be sure,
You have planted a tree that will not die."*

The Hebrew word which is translated "grain" means literally "kernel."

masters of their craft or of Hebrew. At least they know that they do not know. So the normal practice is to interpose a transition period between tutored apprenticeship and independent settlement. But they form their "grain" before starting on this further training for independence. And they decide which of the Labour parties within the Confederation they will join. This done, the new group work as labourers in an existing collective or co-operative unit. They are henceforth maintained by that unit, receiving their board in return for their work. Their instructor may or may not go with them in this third year. The declaration of independence is associated with a declaration of adherence to the comprehensive Labour Organisation, on the one hand, and to a particular section of it, on the other hand. Under the influence of the party to which the tutor village belongs, the "grain" attaches itself to that party within the Labour movement. The big villages, known strictly as Kibbutzim, attach their graduates to the organisation of the United Kibbutz whose motto is "Big and growing." The smaller hamlets of the "Young Guard" and the "Gordon" collectives foster sympathy for the "fellowship of Kevutzot." The section of the Labour Organisation henceforth looks after its new members, and helps them in the first place to find opportunities of work, and in due time to find independent settlement.

Normally, the graduates of Youth Aliyah form the "grain" of the new group in combination with a Palestinian-reared "grain" of the working youth. So a fresh, fertilising seed is formed and planted. The combination at the end of the training has had happy results. The German and Palestine youth blend together; the years in the land have given them a common aim and resolve, and the differences which remain enrich the joint group. The "grain" is chosen with great care and heart-searching. Each member of it must not only volunteer, but be approved by the rest; for it is not just a temporary working group, but a fraternity which may last for life. They ponder carefully on the name of the group. It may be connected with the place of their training—Galileans, or, with their religious and social outlook, the Faithful. They ponder, too, on the name of the place, which may be connected (a) with the character of the settlement: Matzuba (meaning Outpost); (b) with a comrade who has died in the land: Aric; (c) with a Jewish worthy such as Maimonides: Rambam; (d) with a historic site: Genossar.

In the transition year they work the land more hours of the day than when they were apprentices; but they continue their cultural preparation for two or three hours daily; or they work

the land on a five-day week, and give two days to their other activity. In some cases they stay with their original hosts; more often they move to a fresh settlement in order to gain experience or more thorough knowledge of the country; or because the principles of another group appeal to them. One of the youth parties, however, requires the third-year preparation to be in the place where the group served its apprenticeship.

Their individuality is not destroyed by the collective life; and with the German seriousness and love of reflective analysis, which the pioneering Palestine atmosphere has not removed, many record in the journals of the Aliyah their questionings and their aspirations. Even after the third year some feel themselves too young to make the choice of a group. Some have the intellectual longing, and are not sure whether they want the life of constant toil and can express themselves in physical labour. "Have I other capacities hidden within? Shall I suffer all my life from a feeling of dissatisfaction?" Some openly or secretly wish to continue their studies. Some few still feel an uneasiness in the society of the Jews of Eastern Europe or of Palestine. Yet, as has been noted, the large majority elect to remain on the land and to remain in collective groups, and after a third year of preparation, they are ardent to launch out.

Miss Szold recorded the deliberations of the first group which had been apprenticed in a collective village of the Emek; and the account is typical of many: "Seventeen of them had already determined to remain together and form with a similar group of Palestinians a settlement. Five will go to another Kevutza and have additional agricultural training. Eighteen have not yet made up their minds what to do. A few have special desires; one to become a nurse, another a teacher, another a carpenter. A part of the remainder, I fancy, want to go to the cities and earn more to bring their parents from Germany. They are facing a terrible disappointment. Amongst the saddest of my many sad individual experiences are the letters which I receive from a number of the young people who write that they cannot enjoy their happiness and their good fortune because they know how their parents are suffering." In the end a large majority resolved to stay together and form the "grain."

The conflict between the call of the family and the call of the group and of the community was apt before the war to be renewed in those whose parents contrived to get to Palestine. Should the child go to their home and live with them, or should he try to aid them from the slender funds of the collective? A teacher gives a pathetic illustration of the struggle. A group at Ain Harod

finished its preparation and decided on its plans. One of the members of the "grain" went to the city to visit his parents and inform them. He found them in wretched poverty, and resolved to leave the "grain" and stay by their side. On his way back to announce his decision, he had the vision of the comradeship of Ain Harod: and returned and said to the group: "I believe that I shall find the way of helping my father also if I go with you."

Before they leave their hosts, the Aliyah are entertained at a farewell feast, as they were entertained when they arrived. Sometimes the apprentices, about to start on their own, and in accord with the spirit of equality, give their hosts a constructive criticism of the organisation of the settlement where they have been trained. But the dominant note when they part is not criticism on either side. Rather is it affection and rejoicing of friends and comrades. Barriers of origin and age have been cast down in the common purpose; and the parting present is usually a hand-written magazine, which is a grateful record of the happiness they have enjoyed and the spirit they have breathed, ending with a tribute to their instructor.

The decision of the first group of sixty at Ain Harod about their future when, after two years, they must leave their masters, was naturally regarded as a significant step. What the first group did would be an example to those who followed. At that time (1936) the Aliyah was still small in quantity, and opportunity for service was to an extent easier. Early it was agreed to form a combined group with a party of the "Working Youth" of the Yishuv. The vexed question was whether they should immediately seek to be a working "grain," or should arrange a third year of preparation. The decision to quit themselves at once as men prevailed; forty-seven of the sixty members of Youth Aliyah would go with the new group. They prospected with their partners for a field of work and found it at Sheikh Abrek, a rough area which had been recently acquired in the hills, above the Haifa end of the Emek. The land was not assigned to them to settle; but they were to work on it, clear it of stones and thistles, construct farm buildings, and so forth.

In January, 1936, the advance party set out on their venture; and a week or two later the rest of the forty-seven followed. It was a much sterner life than they had known at Ain Harod, particularly in the winter cold and rains. In place of the stone houses, they now had tents; in place of sanitary installations they must fetch, over two miles, every drop of water except the rain which they could collect on their tent sheets; in place of a well-ordered village, they must make do with a rough barrack for

cating- and living-room, for store and for study and rest. The hired work was distributed over a large area, which it took some of them two hours to reach from their camp. And when, after a few months, the Arab outbreaks against the Government and the Jews produced a state of siege for every Jewish village and outpost, they must organise the defence of their camp. If the alarm was given, they could not stay in their tents at night, but must go to the one house on the estate. Fifteen out of seventy members (including their Palestinian comrades), must stand guard each night.

A year later they receive for themselves elsewhere, but in the neighbourhood, a holding of six acres as the nucleus of the future permanent settlement. They buy a tractor, a truck and a flock of goats, they begin to build permanent quarters, and they lay water-pipes. They construct a dining-room where they can all be gathered. In their improved condition, they attract new members from the Youth Aliyah itself and other groups; and become a regular Kevutza. As they make good on their small-holding, they receive more land. It was symbolical that, in their early days of ploughing the soil, they struck on the cemetery of a Jewish town of the second century, which was one of the seats of the Sanhedrin. The place was probably, too, the home of Rabbi Judah the Prince, who in that century made the first compilation of the Oral Law. So was this young generation of modern Jews from Europe physically rooted in the soil on which the masters of Jewish tradition lived and worked, like them combining cultivation with study. In Palestine, past, present and future are constantly united and at once.

The group called their final place of settlement "Alonim," which means "oaks." For part of their land bore the remains of an ancient oak forest, which may date also from that second century. One of the veterans of this group, reflecting on their progress seven years after they came to the land, judged that it was a mistake that, in the exuberance and pride of youth, they had gone straight from the two years of preparation to a working Kibbutz. And in that respect their example was not often followed. But these first offsprings of the Aliyah were a chosen generation, and made good.

On the seventh anniversary of the founding of Alonim they held a Sabbatical-year feast. The first settlement of the graduates is regarded as the Big Brother of those which followed. Friends came in hundreds from the area around, many from Ain Harod, the tutor village of the group which feels a paternal affection towards the first children of the Aliyah; and a score of "grain"

comrades who were serving with the armed forces. Alonim comprised in 1942, 250 souls, including a group of young Palestinian apprentices from the towns. They came from many lands, from Yemen, Turkey and Canada, as well as from Germany, Austria and Poland. They farmed 200 acres of corn land, 15 acres of vegetable garden, 10 of orchard; and their livestock included 500 goats. After seven years they had built twenty stone dwellings. They had, too, their children's home for thirty babies born to their members; the offspring of the intermarriage of the youth from Germany and other communities. They had their barn, their cows, their sheep (which supplied wool for the women to knit and weave), their workshops for carpentry and metal work. Thanks to the demand which the war has brought for the produce of Palestine, their annual ledger showed a profit of some thousands of pounds.

At the celebration a platform was erected in the woodland of the settlement. One of the members read a megillah—that is, a scroll written in the Biblical style of the Book of Chronicles, and tracing their history from the beginning of their exodus. The chronicle told how they wandered from place to place to five sites, till they reached this home in Alonim.

Only a fortunate few graduates are able, even after their third year of preparation, to establish themselves as an independent Kibbutz on the land. A further period of service on the land of others is interposed; a graduation of the graduates in forms of paid labour without tutelage. A long and difficult road leads to independent settlement—like Jacob's service for Rachel. Straightway, however, they aim to fix a home centre by the side of an existing village, and then maintain their group collectively by their labour. Often the centre is in the old type of "colony," where the individual farmer has a relatively large estate and employs hired labourers, some Jewish, some Arab. It is a constant aim of the young socialists to bring the idealistic principles and their collective practice into the old Yishuv. That aim they call the "mastery of labour." They may have a hard time with their employers, who do not always affect the spirit of equality and fraternity which distinguishes the Socialist Kevutza.

The restriction of orange-growing, the principal cultivation of the older villages, which the war economy of Palestine induced, brought at first the shadow of unemployment and low wages. For work in the orange-groves was the readiest means of rural livelihood before the war. It meant that members of the group

must go further afield to find paid work, to industry in a town, or to a Government contractor for building. But the kernel of the group would be maintained in its chosen centre. The auxiliary farm, with a few arable acres, some livestock, chickens and bee-hives, not only gives them a habitation and a place as a group, but it provides part of their food. Above all, it gives the prospect of the independence to come in their notch of land. It is rare for them to build permanent houses in their waiting period; wooden shacks and tents are their portion. A few marry at this stage and form their own family, and every baby born is a thrill to the group.

It is another pride of the waiting "grains," now free from tutelage, to make Hebrew their language. For the German members that requires an effort, since they rarely master it in the two or three years of preparation. But it is a part of their adult status that they should be Hebrew Jews and not German or Czech Jews. The association with the native "Camp of Workers" or the "Working Youth" of the home helps them to keep to the resolve. Another point of pride is to start a fund for the help of the parents who have managed to get to Palestine after their children, and are struggling to establish themselves. All members of the group, of course, share in the contribution to the fund for the purpose. Few, too, are the new Kevutzas which do not include some parents.

When the year or years of the labour probation have passed, the group may at least receive a permanent allocation of land from the national institutions, either an extension of their farm or a fresh outpost. Thither they gradually transfer their scattered members, and begin to build and plant the settlement. To add brick to brick, wall to wall, acre to acre, is the way of building. For a further period they must in part maintain themselves by the wage-earning of some of the members. Bit by bit they reduce their dependence on "outside labour," and become a productive, self-supporting unit, a collective Kevutza or more rarely a co-operative Moshav. If they move their centre, they hand over their former employment, and sometimes their shacks and tents, to another graduate group which is going through the same probation. In the first years their way of living is hard, and they earn their bread by the sweat of their brow.

The system of self-examination and free criticism in conference, which is characteristic of the Aliyah movement, has been applied to the graduate groups. Immediately after the eightieth birthday celebration of Miss Szold at Ben Shemen, leaders of all the groups met for the first time, and discussed their difficulties, their

complaints and the remedies. Some hard things were said of the farmer colonists; but all the groups were resolved to make good where they were. A divine discontent was healthy. The big question was how to turn vision and faith to the language of fighting reality. They deplored the loss of a few comrades who had fallen during the disturbances or in the sporadic raids of Arab marauders. And they deplored equally the loss of comrades who had drifted away from the group community. Every effort must be strained to hold the weaker vessels or win them back. For they apprehended that individually they would be isolated in the urban mass. At best they would relapse into the old discarded ambitions; at the worst they would lose their sense of values. The principle holds among these young graduates that all Israel is responsible, the one for the other.

A fourth part of those brought by the Movement to Palestine are lost to the agricultural fraternity, and undergo different fates. Some prefer industry in the town to agriculture, some join their parents, but may return with them later to agricultural life on their holdings. Some cannot renounce, or make fair to resume, their intellectual striving because of the old Adam. A few turn to commerce and clerical callings, and among the women a larger proportion to child-nursing and domestic service. During the war a considerable portion of the males were temporarily drawn from the productive groups because they responded to the call for national service. But that could be in no wise deemed a loss. And as their service was mostly in Palestine and the neighbouring countries of the Middle East, they were able to maintain close touch with their comrades in their leave periods.

During the last years the Central Office of the Aliyah has been concerned to foster a social life among those comrades who have left the groups and are dwelling in towns. In Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv clubs have been organised for the graduates; and a leader has been appointed who arranges the programme of the weekly meetings with lectures, musical evenings, discussions on social problems. It is the aim to attract to the clubs, not only the graduates of the Youth Aliyah, but also the general youth, so as to extend to the city one of the basic principles of the Movement, integration into the Yishuv.

Two score of these labour groups, formed of the graduates of the Aliyah and young Palestinians, are dotted over the country. They are no longer a separate part of the Yishuv, but absorbed into the agricultural and social body. They are found particularly

in the extreme parts of the least of lands; on the Galilean ridges in the north, in the well-watered Plain of Huleh, which has still largely to be reclaimed, in the north-east; by the dividing Jordan Valley in the east, and by the barren shores of the Dead Sea and on the arid plain in the south. During the years of troubles, the settlements were planted in the midst of an Arab people in revolt and of Arab robber bands. The pioneers must be constantly on the alert. Like those who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity, the pick in one hand and the sword in the other, they must guide the plough with their right hand, and carry the rifle on their shoulder.

The Huleh region, though notoriously malarial, was favoured because it was a fresh area which the Jews were beginning to reclaim in these years. A fisher group was planted at one of the Hulch posts; another of the kind on the Eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, and a third in the Vale of Zebulun between Haifa and Acre, fishing in the Mediterranean. Another was on the coast south of Haifa, by the remnants of Cæsarea, which was the chief harbour and the capital of Roman Palestine. To-day all that remains of Herod's city is half-buried ruins and scraps of temples, forums and moles. Planted amid the ruins, the infant hamlet, which has taken the name of "Meadows of the Sea" (S'dot Yam), is engaged both in fishing and in the building of boats.

The group by the Dead Sea embarked on a novel pioneering activity. Some of the members had spent a year in that abyss as labourers in the potash works at the north and south ends of the Sea, or at the oasis of Engedi, which suddenly bursts out from the barren shore. They were fired with the adventure of removing the curse from the blasted heath. Neither university professors from Jerusalem nor soil experts from the agricultural experimental station of the Jewish Agency could dissuade them by warnings of labour lost. They were to reclaim a salt-encrusted area, and turn it to sweet earth by diverting waters from the Jordan and washing the soil acre by acre. To begin, they must make a soil laundry, dividing the land into tiny irrigated plots; and when the salt was eliminated by six months' repeated washing, they could turn to cultivate.

After two years they began to reap a harvest of vegetables and bananas and even of dates. They had their cattle, of a breed enured to the torrid heat, their chickens, and their ponds for fish-breeding, which has been a favourite wartime industry. They were camped near the industrial enterprise which is recovering from the Sea of Salt, known for centuries as the Dead Sea, the

life-giving substances of potash and other minerals. And they use those substances to make their farm, the lowest in the world, an acre of fertility. The land which has been reclaimed is already among the most productive in Palestine, and yields crops double those of the other Jewish settlements. After four years they have a flourishing miniature village. They have built a score of houses for their 120 members, including ten babies who are cared for in a babies' home, and have planted a flower-garden in front of the houses which, amid the surrounding waste, affords an added beauty. They have arranged their library, and have set up their workshops in which they carry out repairs for the neighbouring industries, and so supplement their income from the land. Their members are drawn in part from graduates of the secondary schools of Palestine. And they have chosen for the name of the Kevutza "Chugim," which means "groups." We may see in their enterprise an image of the idea of the Aliyah; to clean a young generation, encrusted with the salt of hate, and make it productive by the living springs of enthusiasm. Still more isolated is a group at the southern end of the Dead Sea by Sodom and Gomorrah. They are not a settlement, but a squadron of labourers, as the Hebrew term has it, part of a troop of 300, drawn from many Aliyah graduate groups, who are working for a wage with the Potash Company and enduring the hardest toil in that "abomination of desolation."

Another graduate group in the extreme south of Palestine has begun to establish itself in the parched Negeb, between Beer-sheba and the Egyptian frontier. Its post is at Asluj, which was recently a military camp, but was in the early centuries of the Christian era a Byzantine city. This group is an offshoot of a settlement of Aliyah graduates of Judca, Givat Brenner, Kevutzat Schiller and others, which first found a centre in one of the older Jewish villages, Rishon LeZion. Their original farm, which was called "Revivim" (Showers), was in a delectable spot, and their labour squadron found employment readily in the many Army camps of the district; but they were looking for the opportunity of pioneering and for a more adventurous life. And so their stalwarts have gone to reclaim the desert south, beyond any Jewish settlement in that region.

At the opposite end of Palestine, almost on the frontiers of Syria, the graduates' village of Matzuba (Post) is perched 1,500 feet high in the Galilean hills. They have passed days of adversity, and they have planted part of the rough hill-land and built their first permanent buildings. Contrary to custom, primacy was given not to the babies' home, but to a weaving workshop. For

that accessory industry is the present mainstay of their economy. The young families still live in tents, but they make tents beautiful. Their members include some of those early pioneers of the German Aliyah who brought an artistic sense and have not let it die.

The religious groups have their own graduate settlements in which the traditional life is faithfully observed. The first of them was planted near one of the outposts of the "Spiritual Labourer" in the plain of Baisan (the Beth-Shan of the Bible). There the Kibbutz of Tirat Zvi held its beleaguered post against the Arab bands in the stormy years, 1936-9, and lost five of its members. During that period the offspring Kevutza, which took the name of S'deh Eliyahu (Elijah's Meadow), was planted. Like other Jewish outposts on the borders, the position had to be secured within one day, so that the settlers should be able to protect themselves forthwith against night attack. The manner of the planting was for troops of young pioneers from villages around to sally forth at night in their lorries, carrying watch-towers and searchlight and stockade and hutments, all prefabricated, set them up between dawn and dusk in the newly-won land, and in the eve leave the new group in their home, able to communicate by the light tower with their Jewish neighbours, if the need should be.

These religious graduates have a well-watered area which, lying 800 feet below the sea level, is a natural hothouse producing fruits of all kinds. Their land is in strips interspersed among Arab fields. They have happy relations with their neighbours, Bedouin Arabs pasturing their herds. It is an aspiration of the graduate groups generally to learn Arabic. For they realise the need of knowledge of the Arab speech and manners if they are to attain good relations and understanding. They must not be European colonists, but Orientals. The Arab problem is discussed in the magazines which the groups circulate among their members, and while the party of the Young Guard resolutely advocate a bi-national Palestine, the members of the other parties, though less definite, are alive to the importance of the question.

S'deh Eliyahu lies almost as low as the Aliyah hamlet by the Dead Sea; but its lands have not been caked with salt. The group have built themselves permanent houses, and have made the plan for a village of two hundred souls with synagogue and school. Like the premier settlement of Alonim, they, too, have received a band of children of the towns whom they are educating in physical work, the Socialist idea and Judaism. One of their comrades came to them from Australia, having been transported

there from England during the crisis of 1940, when some thousands of the refugees in Britain were sent overseas. He was enabled to come to Palestine in the following year, and is the English instructor of the group.

Another group is composed of the boys and girls who had been apprentices in the children's village of Shefeya. They were the wards of the Junior Hadassah organisation of America, which helped them to acquire land in Northern Galilee. They established there a settlement bearing the name of Hadassah, with sixty-five Aliyah members.

Several features are common to all the groups. They each produce their magazine, sometimes monthly, sometimes every fortnight, which records in detail what is happening in their village and to their absent members. It tells of the development on the farm, of the loans which they have incurred and repaid, of the labour groups which are working for the community, but outside it. During the war years it has included regularly letters from the men of the group who are in the Forces; and also letters from those members who are temporarily working away from the centre. Regularly, too, it includes self-criticism—following the Russian way—of their activities. Occasionally the Kevutza prints selections from their magazine for circulation not only to their members but to all who are interested, and so provide for posterity a chronicle of the years of growth.

In every group a programme is drawn up daily of the distribution of the work, and is placarded on the notice-board in the common-room. A work's committee is an essential part of the organisation, and it allots the daily tasks. Some functions, indeed, are permanent, at least for a few weeks or months. But many are distributed every day, and the distribution occupies the committee each evening when the manual work is done. Every graduate village, too, has its appointed representative to deal with the Government. He is known as the Mukhtar, the official term of the Palestine Administration for the Headman of a quarter or village. The Kevutza elects him normally for a year; and he receives from the Government a small grant which, of course, is paid into the common chest. It is his function to settle with the local officers of the Administration the taxes and other dues of the community, to verify certificates of membership, to deal with neighbouring Arabs in case of any troubles or differences, and generally to be the link between Government and the community. A knowledge of the three official languages, English, Hebrew and Arabic, is essential for the office.

Two funds were established for the assistance of the graduate

pioneers, one by Eddie Cantor, the children's advocate, and the other by Hadassah, as a tribute to Miss Szold on her eightieth birthday. They are used mostly for loans for the equipment of the pioneer camps, and for stock, cows, hen-roosts, beehives, mules and wagons. But one or two items have a special character. Thus £500 was paid to the Palestine Aviation Company for teaching twenty-five young men to fly; and to the group camped at the Dead Sea a gift was made of a filter for purifying their saline water and of a refrigerator. By 1942 a total sum of £35,000 had been expended in loans.

The fruit of the sowing is that, of the 7,000 who were brought to Palestine by 1941 and finished their training, three-quarters have become attached to the soil and are productive land-workers; and of the other quarter a large part are productive workers of another kind. They have imbibed the enthusiasm for planting and creating; and in their settlements they have combined with groups of boys and girls born and bred in the motherland. They have dropped any class consciousness of the professional and middle class, where it existed; and cherish a pride in being labourers. They have dropped also consciousness of any Western superiority over the East-European Jew; and in its place feel admiration for him on account of his greater Jewishness. Their life is transformed spiritually as well as physically, because they enjoy the five freedoms: not only the freedoms of speech and thought, the freedoms from want and fear, but the positive and creative freedom, to work and do service to the community. That is the characteristic of the collective life in the Kevutza, and, indeed, of the whole working Yishuv; and that is, too, the eminent feature in the groups of graduates of the Aliyah.

CHAPTER 13

GRANDCHILDREN OF THE ALIYAH

BEFORE SHE CAME to the work of the Youth Aliyah, Miss Szold was concerned about the education of the children of the poorest parents living in the cities of Palestine and their preparation for life. Immigration brought to the land many families, some from the Orient and some from the West, who were feckless or destitute, or failed to find their place; and their children were neglected. Although the aim of the community was that every child should receive, anyhow, elementary education, in

fact, a number of these children—estimated at 10,000—did not receive any regular schooling. Many more were withdrawn from school at a tender age, and earned a precarious existence on the streets as bootblacks, newspaper-sellers, errand-boys, and in other blind-alley occupations.

The task of providing social care for these children, as well as for adults in need, was undertaken by Miss Szold on behalf of the National Council in the years that preceded the Hitler persecution. She could not brook it that “the parents ate sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.” When she assumed the direction of the Youth Aliyah, she had from the outset the aspiration to link with it the care for the under-privileged town children already in the land. She addressed an appeal to the responsible Jewish bodies for equality and social justice for “our own children,” who had the same right to be helped to take part in the productive upbuilding as the children who came from the countries of oppression. If the boys and girls of Germany suffered from the frustration and humiliation imposed by persecutors, these neglected children of Palestine suffered from the frustration and inhibitions of family circumstance. They were a forgotten generation. Another leader of social service in Palestine backed her appeal. “Thousands of children who come from foreign countries are helped, and the Land of Israel is turned for them to a fatherland. For how many children born in the land, or growing up in it, is the Land of Israel turned to a stranger?”

For many of the young generation of Palestine, indeed, more happily placed, movements parallel with the Youth Aliyah were fostered, with the aim of turning them into agricultural workers, organised in youth societies, and aiming at the community life. As with the Youth Aliyah, these Back to the Land movements were initiated by the young people themselves. They led to the foundation of two bodies: “Noar Oved,” the Working Young, who were sprung from the families of the Socialist workers in the agricultural and industrial community, and the “Camp of those going up,” who sprang from the professional and the middle class and had been educated in secondary schools, but shared the productive and the Socialist enthusiasm. We have seen that, when the two years’ preparation of the youth from Germany was completed, and the graduates were framing their future destiny as independent groups, they were regularly combined with groups of the Palestine youth who had had the like preparation and were waiting to take their part in the collective activity. The Kevutzas of the Aliya graduates are frequently training-places for these young Palestinians. Much, too, was done in Palestine to help

orphans—a term of large connotation, which included children without one parent—to become useful and productive workers. But till the outbreak of the Second World War, the appeal for the children of the “submerged tenth” was little heeded. Circumstances enabled the Youth Aliyah Organisation during the war to make a great step in advance.

In the first place, from the beginning of 1941 till the winter of 1942, very little could be done to bring children from Europe to Palestine. The inflow never ceased, but it was reduced. The enthusiasm of the workers for Youth Aliyah did not abate either within Palestine or outside Palestine, and the opportunity was given to harness it to the domestic cause. Again, the eightieth birthday of Miss Szold was marked by gifts to her from the Jewish community of Palestine and the Jewish community of America, of which she was free to dispose. They gave the funds necessary for the undertaking of a new offshoot of the Aliyah. Hitherto, it had not been possible to apply any part of the contributions for the salvage of Jewish children in Europe to regenerate the children of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Tiberias, etc., who were in need. Lastly, the living educational and social instrument which had been built up in the collective villages of Palestine, and was eager to continue its task of preparing the young generation, stood ready to assume the kindred enterprise. The “Aliyah” could receive a fresh interpretation. It should be a march of the youth *in* the land and not only *to* the land; and the secondary meaning of the word, social and spiritual ascent, could be applied fully to a movement “from the slum to the village.”

So it was that in 1941 the new development was launched. In one of her letters to the graduates of the Youth Aliyah who were enrolled in the British Forces, Miss Szold gave an account of the beginning of the enterprise:

“The knowledge of what you are doing in the war enables us to accompany you from afar on your difficult road, and strengthens our hand to carry on with our activities in a new way which is known to you. This way is a little different because of the addition of an important activity to our work, the training of young Palestinians. We have stirred up a movement inside the country, and we have taken upon ourselves the task of transferring the youth from the towns to the farms.”

The movement, like the Youth Aliyah itself ten years earlier, began on a small scale. The first “magazine” of the town children was limited to seventy-five boys and girls. It grew within two years to embrace 600. Thanks to the aid of the Junior Hadassah and the parent Hadassah, it is now an integral part of

the Aliyah. It is a special purpose of this internal "Save the Children" to provide for the boys and girls from the Oriental communities, the Turks, the Yemenites, the Kurds, the Georgians, whose families were economically and socially the most depressed. It is laid down, also, that at least one-half of the children to be taken from these communities should be girls, and in fact the ratio of girls to boys is three to two. They are chosen by the Palestine youth bodies and the Jewish social institutions in the towns; and the system of sifting the candidates is modelled on that which had been devised for the choice of the applicants in Germany when the Youth Aliyah was started. As there, camps and hostels were opened, in which the children were gathered, and lived for a few weeks a communal life under the eye of tried instructors and social workers, so, in Palestine, camps were opened in a few of the collective villages where these children of the towns were gathered under the care of the tried Madrichim of the Aliyah. They lived together under free and open-air conditions to which they were strangers. They were started on physical work, and learned the rudiments of ordered community life. In the way which has become characteristic of the Aliyah movement, everything was done to give a festal character to their entry into the rural society. At the same time, regard was paid to the religious tradition, which was more observed amongst these children of Oriental families than amongst the young generation of German, Austrian and Czechoslovakian Jewry. A part of the children were enrolled in the "Sons of Akiba," a youth association of the Orthodox.

After a few weeks' preparation, three groups, each of about twenty-five, were selected. Some of those who had been in the preparation camps had not stayed the course. Some could not be received, because they did not seem to be fit in every way for the country life. In the end the three groups were divided: one to the graduate settlement of the Youth Aliyah itself at Alonim, one to the religious village of Tirat Zvi, which included real graduates, and one to the collective village planted in honour of Field-Marshal Smuts, which bears the name of Hill of John (Yochanan = Jan). The last group had a Madrich who has won fame throughout the land. He is the shepherd of the young settlement, by name Mattathias (Mattatiah), and has wonderful skill in piping. He composes songs, and is said to have the wizard power of the Pied Piper in attracting the young. From a tender of sheep he has become a teacher of youth.

It was a special joy for Miss Szold that she was able to entrust to her children, as it were, the care and regeneration of the first

grandchildren. The young graduates of Alonim and Tirat Zvi, who had come, as green apprentices a few years before from Germany, and had finished their preparation, were now embarked as independent groups. They were eager to undertake the training of the children of Palestine. The former apprentices could be masters and guides. They could do for others what had been done for them, and help Youth Aliyah to fulfil its plan of social help and regeneration for those children in the land who were most in want of it.

We have a record of the progress of these Palestine children in their country villages. They have a full programme of work, like that of the youth who came from abroad. In the morning they labour in the fields, in the afternoon they have lessons, and in the eve they take their part in the recreations of the village community. Their lessons, indeed, are different from those which were worked out for the young people from Germany. For them, Hebrew did not have to be acquired. It was the home language of almost all of them. But they knew little of Hebrew or other literature. The Bible was not a sealed book to them, but an understanding of the Bible in relation to the Land—that was new, and had to be given by education. They had not, like those who came from Europe, a sound basis of general knowledge; some did not know the three R's. Most had little or no conception of general history, of economics, of art, and it was the aim of the instructors to bring them up to the cultural level of the community in which they lived. Lessons were a very important part of their preparation.

It was, too, as vital a part, as it has been for those from abroad, to let them see the land itself; its hills and valleys, its rivers and villages; for they knew hitherto only the towns. One of the teachers tells of the deep impression made when they were taken through the Plain of Esdraelon, the Emek, and were told the story of the Judges of Israel who fought their battles and made their exploits in that Plain. For the first time, the Bible became to them a living book. Another teacher tells how great was the amazement when they began to learn of the working of Nature in the trees and flowers and the animals. For them, grass had been, as it was once for many Cockney children, the thing on which it was forbidden to walk. Another tells how he gave a group their first notions of painting. He brought them reproductions of Van Gogh—the most popular artist in the Yishuv of Palestine—and thus led them on to some desire for expression in drawing and colour. Their religious life, too, was deepened in the society. For, if most of them came from homes which were

observant of the tradition in an external way, they had little conception of the spiritual content of the ceremony. That understanding was aroused by giving to the Sabbath, for example, the aspect of beauty, by the decoration of the room with flowers, the kindling of the Sabbath Lights, the singing of songs at table, and so forth. Palestine has a certain genius for Judaism.

The experience of the first two years of the latest development of the Aliyah has been happy. Boys and girls who were street urchins in the towns have imbibed in the Kibbutz the love of the community and of ordered work. They were, when they came to the villages, what is called in Palestine "a Kibbutz Galuyoth," i.e. a collection from many dispersions, but they have become in the villages a "Kibbutz Eretz," a collective of comrades attached to the soil. With scarcely any exception, all of the first "magazine" have decided to remain land-workers at the end of their two years' training. The movement has been justified in its faith that they, the second generation or the grandchildren of the Aliyah, would continue the chain.

It has been another happy outcome, that these first groups and their tutor villages have prepared the way for more groups. Another half score of settlements and villages are willing to receive and train them. And the Aliyah becomes steadily a more complete instrument of social care and regeneration for the under-privileged children of Palestine as well as for those who have wandered from a broken to a living home. A few children of the city who have been examined for the Aliyah have been found to require special care, because they are mentally backward. Since last year it has been possible to provide for them, and for backward children who have come from Europe, in a home which is maintained on behalf of the Aliyah by the Friendly Order of the Sons of the Covenant (Bnei Brith).

The writer has had the opportunity of visiting several of these groups in their training and watching their transformation. It is not always easy for them to express their thoughts, but they have acquired in large measure that enthusiasm that is characteristic of the village life of Palestine. One group in a religious village, where the guardians are graduates of the religious Aliyah, was peculiarly notable. Boys and girls together were studying the Mishnah, the compilation of Jewish Law of the second century, under a teacher who had come to Palestine from France and had made his Talmudic studies at a Jewish College of Montreux. Most of the children were from the Asiatic communities. Their former environment was as different as could be from that of the teacher and from that of the German-sprung village and yet they

were visibly being absorbed into a Palestinian life which is both European and Asiatic, and into a productive rural community which holds fast to the tradition. In another of the religious villages two groups were gathered; one of twenty-five who had finished their two years of training, the other of twenty-five from the towns who were to begin their preparation. The outward contrast between them was eloquent; the graduates who had elected to serve a third year of apprenticeship in the same settlement were strong, confident, eager-eyed. The others were by comparison listless and unsure of themselves, but they were welcomed with open arms by the older settlers and by those who had just graduated.

It is the habit to have a festal parting even when the group has elected to stay as labourers with its masters; and the writer witnessed two of those celebrations by the first "magazines" of the grandchildren of the Aliyah. Each group gave an entertainment of music and drama; some of it written by themselves with the help of the Madrich. At the village of Jan Smuts mentioned above the Madrich had imparted to his charges something of his genius for the arts, and there was an elation about the players and the audience. The newly-formed "grain" of the Noar Oved had adopted as their motto: "Open the Way for those who are to come."

About a year after the initiation of the movement to bring the Palestine youth from the slum to the village a kindred effort was begun on behalf of the younger children in the towns. Recha Freier, who in 1932 had the vision of the Youth Aliyah in Germany, and in 1940 organised the rescue of some of the refugee youth from the Balkan countries, came to live in Palestine in 1941. She, too, was struck by the wretched conditions of many of the children, particularly among the Oriental communities, in the towns; and she conceived a plan to take them to the country at the age of eleven or twelve to fit them for agricultural pioneering. That effort should supplement the extension of the internal Aliyah. In 1942 she placed the first group of twenty-five young boys and girls, taken from the old city of Jerusalem, in the village of Yavneh. The religious Haluzim, whose original settlement was in Rodges, had moved to that site of historic association to which, after the destruction of the Temple in the first century, the spiritual head of the Jewish people transferred the schools and the Sanhedrin. The children were drawn from religious families whose parents were too poor and destitute to bring them up. For three years they would be educated in the village school

during the morning hours, and in the afternoon be engaged in the field. A medical report issued at the end of the first year of training noted that their physical standard had been raised to that of the healthy European child; but the capacity for physical work was still limited. Youth Aliyah has taken over responsibility for them. The movements for the older and younger children of the towns of Palestine are advancing together; and promise, as they grow, to give to the poorest and most backward of the urban generation of Palestine an equal opportunity in the pioneering society to that which has been given to the Aliyah from the towns of Europe.

CHAPTER 14

UNFINISHED SYMPHONY

WHEN THE JEWS WERE expelled from Spain at the end of the fifteenth century, thousands of the children were torn from their parents and sent to the island of St. Thomé off the coast of Africa, to be reared in the Christian faith, if they survived at all. That was an *auto-da-fé*, an act of faith of the Christian Kings. The historical memory of Miss Szold recalled that incident of the Inquisition when in 1935 she presented to the Zionist Congress her first report on the work of the Youth Aliyah. Jewish children again must be taken from their parents' homes and sent to a distant country; but this time they should go with their parents' blessings to the homeland of their ancestors, and should be restored to the life and, it was hoped, the faith of their ancestors. It was the essence of the ideal and the plan of the Aliyah that the boys and girls, uprooted from Europe, should be rooted, and not just settled, in the National Home. And in the tragic breaking up of family-life, which had been, so to say, the citadel of Judaism through its struggles over the centuries, they should be made to feel that they belonged to a constructive human and hopeful society, and be integrated into it. They would be members of a larger family, which is the nation. Mazzini pointed out that family and nation are the two links in the essential relation between individual and humanity. And these young men and women would be linked with humanity through the national society, till they founded their own families.

When the Aliyah movement started, Stefan Zweig, the Austrian writer, pointed to the two dangers which menaced the Jewish youth in Germany; the sense of inferiority which, if it is engendered in childhood, saps vitality and the joy of life; and the

poison of hatred which, if injected in childhood, would corrupt the adult. It was the purpose to take the children out of the atmosphere of humiliation and hatred into that of a living community, friendship and creative enthusiasm. Fortunately, Nature so works that the child and the growing man remember the experiences which are happy, and forget the experiences which are unhappy. And so the young persons, coming into a friendly world of which they could form a part, imbibing ideals to which they were attuned, and integrated into a kindred community, could prevail over the searing experiences of their childhood. From one sorrow, indeed, some could not be delivered, even in the warm welcome of the homeland. When they migrated to Palestine, many of their parents in Europe were left orphaned; and in Palestine during the World War many of the young people became orphans when their parents were done to death in Poland. Against that loss there was no remedy, except through their part in creating fresh life.

An example of the breaking-up of families may be given from an enquiry made at one of the youth centres in Judea, soon after the outbreak of the world war. The parents and kindred whose place was known were divided thus:

In Palestine	25
Germany and Austria, each	24
England	10
China (Shanghai)	8
Belgium	7
Sweden, Holland and Bohemia, each	3
Yugoslavia and Poland, each	2
And six other countries, each	1

The Aliyah at least has kept the youth together, and laid the foundation of a new well-knit society. During the years of the war the Youth Aliyah has not so much enlarged as transformed its aim. It is no longer a movement to bring youth to Palestine from Germany: it has been and will be concerned to salvage all Jewish children who can be saved from destruction and demoralisation. Its scope is no longer restricted to particular countries or a continent, or to an age-group. It accepted the responsibility, when the challenge came, to take charge of children from the youngest infancy to the end of adolescence. "Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear" limit, in fact, the number and the kind of those whom it can immediately rescue. But the larger purpose is now inscribed on its banners. That purpose involves difficult

problems; but the steadily deepening experience of ten years has prepared the organisation to meet them. Compared with the prospect which faces the Aliyah after the war, the experiment has hitherto been carried out on a small scale. It may be that, before this book appears, the purpose will be realised in much fuller measure, and that some tens of thousands rescued from the threatened massacre of innocents will be brought to the home. Be this as it may, the Aliyah stands ready to march, the moment the ways across sea and land are re-opened to the transports of rescue.

Apart from the tens of thousands in the European prison-house to whom it stretches its arms, it awaits the coming of some thousands of its own children, feeling themselves already part of the family, who have been trained and are waiting patiently and faithfully in Great Britain and a few other lands of freedom. They will surely have the reward of their patience and their constancy when peace dawns, and they will play their part, with the 10,000 already in the land, in educating the thousands more who have in Europe passed through the seven circles of Gehenna. The Aliyah, in a period of darkness and terror, has been a ray of hope to those unnamed thousands. Its activity and its example have been a defence against degradation. Through it the Jewish answer to persecution has been "to renew our days as of old."

The mother of the Youth Aliyah, in her message to the women of America on her eightieth birthday, put before them the need for a larger vista: "The new world, be it a fair or a hateful world, will require an intensification of our strength and every fineness, intellectual vigour, purity of soul and a fervent spirit, and also the addition of new outlooks and new vistas." When she presented her first report on the Aliyah, some 600 strong, to the Congress, she already envisaged its extension to all children without limit of age. What is last in action was first in thought. The immediate task is to bring to Palestine and plant on the land 30,000 children for whom the British Government has undertaken to provide immigration certificates if they can be rescued from Europe. The certificates for once are there, and the children have to be gathered. That task is an earnest of the larger function which the Aliyah will be called upon to render in the days after the war. Nor need the movement then be restricted to the gathering of refugees. It has shown itself as a way of life and educational reform for the Children of Israel everywhere, whether their lines have fallen in free countries or in the lands of oppression. For all the soil of Palestine has proved a generous master, liberating their constructive energies, and, as a Jewish teacher has put it, has

given them a new and hungry courage for social and cultural experiment.

The extraordinary impressiveness of the Palestine collective settlements for the Gentile observer appears in an article written during the war by an officer in the South African Forces, who was the Principal of the Teachers' College in Johannesburg: "The most vivid and lasting impression is of the enthusiasm and the idealism of the settlers themselves. It was most difficult to tear oneself away, so anxious were they to try to impart some of their ideals. They feel themselves pioneers; agricultural pioneers reclaiming waste ground, experimenting in crops, crossing indigenous with imported breeds alike in cattle and in seed; pioneers, too, in a social sense, experimenting in ways of living together, which may eliminate some of the evils of the community, and substitute the good of the community for the interests of the self; and pioneers in nation-building bringing those of their own race from the four corners of the earth, away from persecution and martyrdom, and welding them into one people, with one language and one great ideal—that of showing what great things Jews can achieve if given a chance in their traditional home. A very great deal has been achieved, but the interest is chiefly in the experiment. Some of the great minds of the world have been driven from their countries and are gathered in Palestine; and they are working out experiments in living which may profoundly influence the future of many lands." And an English observer remarked that in the Kibbutz life was lived as God meant it to be lived. The Youth Aliyah has proved again that ideas and ideals, born in the souls of individuals, live and survive in communities.

It is interesting to relate the present-day experiment to the plan of education for the ideal republic, which was designed over 2,000 years ago by the Greek philosopher. Some of Plato's ideas are adopted in the practice of the Aliyah; the equal capacity and the equal training of boys and girls; the basis of education in "gymnastics and music," which are re-interpreted as labour in the field and Hebrew culture; the education in and for the community, away from the family; the absence of any private property and of the motive of individual gain. What distinguishes the Aliyah education from the Platonic idea is that, on the one hand, the absence of family is not original or deliberate; and, on the other, that the education is designed for a whole society, and not for selected classes, who should form the rulers and soldiers.

Studies are being made to-day in the Kibbutz about the development of the family. It is said that the equality of the sexes in every activity leads to a strengthening of the sense of fatherhood and a diminution of the mother's dominant influence on the child. It leads also to the fuller development of the women and girls, and to a reduced desire by them for pleasure and luxury. Life is for both sexes more earnest. At the same time, the economic independence of the child in a collective society strengthens the ties of affection between parents and children. Among the young people of the Aliyah the severance from the parental home conduces to early marriage. They are eager to have a family; and in no society is there more profound regard and careful provision for the children than in the Kibbutz.

As the Aliyah expands its activity, the need for the more systematic development of its educational structure has been manifest. The Madrich, who to-day guides children arriving with very inadequate and diverse schooling, and at times without schooling, must be strengthened in his own education. The seminars and the conferences, which served that purpose in the past, will have to be supplemented by something more permanent. When the Teheran children arrived, a special course was arranged for those men and women who were to look after them, because the special difficulty of the task was apparent. And subsequent experiences with bands from Turkey and the East have confirmed the necessity.

One of the plans to fit the Movement for the larger function is to establish a residential school for the youth instructors. It would be on the lines of a folk high-school of the Scandinavian countries. There those who volunteer for the service of youth would be trained for some months in the humane side of education, and deepen their knowledge of the literature, the history and the philosophy of Judaism. There, too, the instructors engaged in the work would from time to time refresh their minds. An ideal site is suggested in the woodland around Ben Shemen; and the school would be a memorial to Wilfrid Israel, one of the founders of Ben Shemen, who was shot down in a flying-boat in 1941 when on an errand on behalf of the Aliyah.

Another educational need for the larger function which the Aliyah now faces is the establishment in Palestine of a transit camp, where the children, arriving from all parts of the world without preparation or selection, would be sifted. The difficulties in dealing with the arrivals from Teheran and the Oriental countries during the last period have stressed also that need. The camp, which will bear the name of Josiah Wedgwood, a

devoted friend of Jewish youth, and it is hoped will be in the neighbourhood of "Alonim," the first graduate settlement, should accommodate 500 children. It would give the trained workers the opportunity to examine the physical condition and test the educational capacities and the psychological troubles of the children. And there the Madrichim could gain individual experience. The camp, with its permanent buildings, would be available, when not required for its primary purpose, as a meeting-place for festal gatherings, for study courses, or for a youth hostel.

A word should be said about the deeper implications of the group education and group life: the ethos of the collective society. The aim, and, so far as present experience goes, the effect, is not to suppress individuality, but to enlarge it by combining it with a collective and simple creative activity, and with service of the community. The smallness and the variety—the stoutly-preserved variety—of the groups in which the individual lives and works, are a safeguard against the loss of personality and against the production of anything in the nature of a herd mind. Each young person is integrated of his own choice into a society of like-minded, like-aged people, with whom he is knit by a common purpose, common ideals, a common resolve to plant and to build.

The Kevutza seems a blessed response of the individual to the challenge of the machine age. It is small enough to let the individual be a factor in production; large enough to permit the efficient use of the machine for production. Nor could it have been possible to turn the town-dwellers of Europe into farmers in the abyss of the Jordan Valley or in the rough hills of Galilee except through a society of mutual help and a community of comrades.

At the same time the Kevutza is not designed to be an organism, but is a voluntary grouping for life and work, and is constantly changing its members. The individual in it still leads his own intellectual and spiritual life, none the less that he has a minimum of private possessions, and has eschewed material ambitions. The cultivation of the arts helps to foster that desire of self-expression which the youth brought from their former home. Young people from Germany maintain the love of the beautiful in music and painting, and in gardens. When exceptional artistic talent shows itself, a stipend is granted so that it may be developed. And the Hebrew University of Jerusalem has founded scholarships for Aliyah boys and girls.

It is another feature of the group life that it helps the individual to acquire the outlook, the tradition, language and literature of

the motherland. He has not, like the Jewish immigrant overseas, to assimilate himself to a strange environment, and thereby lose part of his personality, but is encouraged rather to recover his people's past and to adjust himself to a community of his people which is striving to renew their past excellence, to shed the burden of abnormality inherited from centuries of repression, and to be again creative. The freedom of expression, which appears in the magazines of the Aliyah apprentices and the Aliyah graduates, reveals no lack of robust self-consciousness. The Kibbutz of our time is reviving some of the conditions of society in which the children of Israel lived in the Bible times. Scholars have shown that the population of the cities of Israel, which were really villages, seldom exceeded 1,000. And in that society a remarkable measure of equality was achieved. So the conditions which produced the Prophets of Israel are being refashioned. The Movement in Palestine may be making spiritual as well as social history; for the youth are returning half-consciously to the way of life of the Jewish and Christian societies in the earliest centuries of the common era, sharing everything in common.

Many sympathetic outsiders, while admiring the achievement of the Kibbutz and the Aliyah in our day, are doubtful whether the rural collective community can prevail again over the urbanising tendencies of the age. They apprehend that, after the first romantic elation passes, the young people will want to return to the life and pleasures of the towns. But if one feature of the social framework of the Yishuv is well-established, it is that the ideal of the young generation is life in the country and on the land; and the countryman looks down on the town-dweller. During the ten years that have passed since the Aliyah was conceived, it has been the most hopeful enterprise, not only of Jewish land settlement in Palestine, but of the regeneration of the Jews as a productive people. The total of young persons redeemed by the movement and established on the soil as agricultural workers in their own groups is about a twentieth of the whole number who have been so planted since the promise of the National Home was given. They are 4,000 out of 80,000 (far the bigger part of the Yishuv is an urban population living in Tel Aviv, Haifa, Jerusalem and other towns). The Aliyah graduates are a much larger proportion of those who have been settled in Socialist groups, working out anew on the land the Prophets' ideal of social justice. That is in itself significant. The Aliyah has been a striking achievement in the collective adventure which has given to Palestine 100 pioneer communities, living according to the principle: "From each according to his capacity; to each

according to his need." And during the war-years it has taken the place of the Pioneer immigration, which was stayed in 1939. The two original experiments, Kibbutz and Aliyah, are closely bound up, and are outstanding social creations of our time.

It is not less significant that the Movement has proved the capacity of the young Jewish man and woman, brought up in the town and sprung from intellectual and bourgeois homes, to become at a leap strong, healthy, productive workers, loving the land and renouncing the individual and material ambition. The majority of the parents in Germany and Austria were engaged in commerce, and the majority of the children are agricultural workers in collective communities. From a different aspect of the building of the home, the movement has proved the capacity of young Jews from Western Europe to mingle happily with Jews coming from Eastern Europe and from the Orient, and with Jews born and bred in the National Home; and to share life fully with them. The Aliyah graduates' villages are a novel form of Hebraic community in which the varied strands of Jewish life are woven together. They illustrate the aspiration of the Jewish people in the Homeland: "Let us become one united nation." Something of the kind happened in the nineteenth century in the United States, where masses of the peoples of Europe, frustrated in their native lands, and flocking in their millions to the modern land of promise, have been welded into a new nation. But there is the difference that in little Palestine, the old land of promise, one small people, drawing its kindred groups from all the countries of the earth, is bound together in its soil by old roots. The inspiring and unifying effect of Palestine is visible in the development of the Teheran children. After one year most of them no longer bear the marks of their three years' homeless wandering. They are children of Palestine, physically healed, mentally sound, Hebraised in speech. Another group of young people who arrived at Haifa a year after the Teheran children, illustrate the growing ambit of the Aliyah. A Portuguese ship, the first neutral vessel to sail through the Mediterranean since 1940, brought in February, 1944, among nearly one thousand refugees from all of Europe, fifty children who were wards of the Movement. That group was equal in numbers to the first party which reached the land from Germany just ten years before. It included boys and girls from fifteen lands. A movement of self-rescue by German Jewish youth bodies has become a movement of rescue for the youth of every land where Jews survive. And it stands ready to help all who can come, the few and the many.

One supreme task, or rather, a supreme part of the ideal of the return has still to be achieved: to bind and unite the children with the spiritual ties of Judaism. They sing in the fields and in the towns of Palestine, "The people of Israel is living"; and they sing that with right. They have shown that the social ideal, given to mankind by the Hebrew prophets 2,500 years ago, and repeated by latter-day Jewish prophets to a class-conscious society in the last century, is a living force among Jews and is the foundation of a way of life. They have to harmonise that ideal afresh with another part of the prophetic teaching about the unity of God, with its corollaries, the unity of the world, its moral order and a single humanity. Yet the Jewish revival in the Jewish land must in the end comprise a revival of Judaism as a faith. Judaism in the land of Israel aims at wholeness of life. Gordon, the seer of the last generation who inspired the ideal of the collective community and of the return of the Jewish intellectual to the land, was also a prophet of the religion of humanity. He taught that, by the renewed daily contact with Nature, man could get rid of the idea of power and domination and replace it by love and co-operation. He taught, too, that the principle, "All Israel responsible one for the other," was not enough. All *men* are responsible one for the other. Only by that faith in human unity could the Jewish youth attain their true manhood in the nationalism of humanity.

The vision of Israel's return to the land of Israel is not fulfilled completely by the redemption of the land and the redemption of the people through physical work and an equal society. Its crown must be to-day, as it was when the captives returned from Babylon to Judaea, a universal idea, a sense of unity with mankind. That idea was implied in the prophet's message which forms the motto of the Youth Aliyah: "There is hope for thy end, and thy children shall return to thy borders."

Yet, though big problems remain, what has been achieved in one decade is surely a remarkable record of regeneration. The youth groups are an example of the power of practical idealism, directed by knowledge and care, to undo the effects of brutal persecution, and to restore to a sorely-tried generation self-respect and dignity. They are a blessed remnant of the Jewish youth of Germany, Austria, Poland and Central Europe. The rest has been done to death or dispersed to all parts of the globe. Their groups look upon life as a brave adventure; and they are characterised by hope, energy and eager response to new ideas. The desire for self-expression and individual attainment is sublimated into the striving for the well-being of the nation. The members

live for the community and not for self. They rejoice at the opportunity of sacrifice for a cause and an ideal. They are conscious, too, of being healthy in body and in mind, upstanding Jews and Jewesses, and above all of being at home. So they provide a hope and an example for the young of the communities in the lands of freedom.

Summing up the story after its ten years of development, we may make this claim. The Aliyah has proved that youth, brought up under the most oppressive and frustrating conditions in towns of Europe, transplanted to a new country and a simple rural life, leaving the smaller family for the larger family, and abandoning the pursuit of individual livelihood and individual ambition to devote themselves to the service of the community and the common well-being, can form a happy productive society and be rooted in an Oriental land. They combine with their European culture the old Hebrew tongue, and with it something of Hebraic thought; and they are building a new Judaea. They are, it is true, only a small fraction of the youth which has been uprooted from the continent of Europe, less than a tithe. But the history of Israel has stressed through the ages the significance of the remnant. The Prophet wrote: "Shear Yashuv," "The remnant shall return." A remnant in our day has returned, and has been sown as grains in the land. And from these grains in the old soil the harvest is being gathered.

Finally, the Aliyah has wider significance, for the post-war reconstruction of the people of Europe as well as for the deliverance of the Jewish children, or such part of them as will be saved. Regeneration of a starved and stunted youth, who to-day exist precariously, concealed from Nazi oppression, will be, in all the delivered countries, a supreme social need. The Palestine Aliyah has shown uniquely the way of redeeming a young haunted generation from the suffering and indignity which have been inflicted on it. That redemption has been achieved by the combination of the healing power of nature and the co-operation of a community with the creative striving of the youth itself, which survives repression, however cruel and calculated. The achievement is essentially that of the community as a whole. The individual directors and the organisation have played a minor, though an important, part. What has enabled the Movement to grow from strength to strength, to rise to the height of need in a period of cataclysm, and to prevail over the baffling barriers of total world-war, is on the one side the will of the Jewish population of Palestine, and on the other the will of the scattered children of Israel. Those two decisive factors will not be wanting

after the war, and will be strengthened by the greater opportunity and the larger need. The Jewish communities will surely go forward in the way they have started. And what the children of Israel have done for their youth in their little notch of a home, the peoples of Europe may likewise be able to do in their fatherlands for their suffering and orphaned children.